


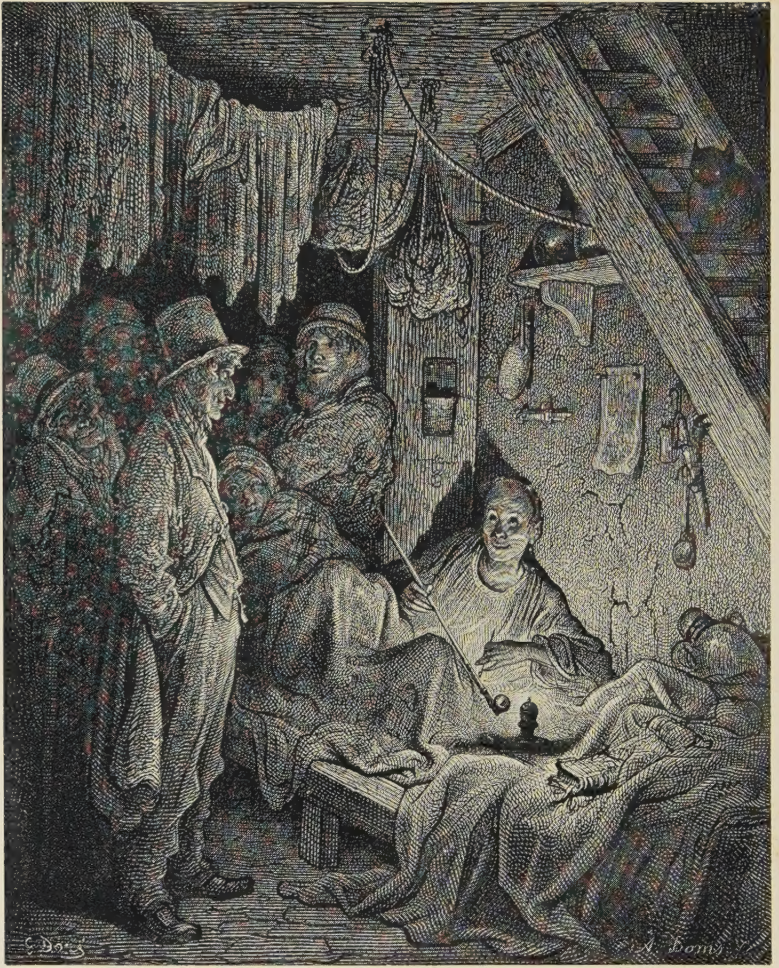
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THIS LONDON
ITS TAVERNS, HAUNTS
AND MEMORIES



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THIS LONDON

ITS TAVERNS, HAUNTS
AND MEMORIES

BY
R. THURSTON HOPKINS

*Illustrated with Drawings
and Photographs*

CECIL PALMER
FORTY-NINE
CHANDOS
STREET
W.C.

FIRST
EDITION
1927
COPY-
RIGHT

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TO CECIL PALMER

MY DEAR CECIL,

Your name stands as the publisher's imprint on this book, and to the casual eye this indicates that it commercially belongs to you. And so it does. But apart from the imprint the merchandize of it is more surely yours than any publisher's contract could ever set forth in cold black and white, for it is merchandize that has passed from author to publisher over a great, calm sea of friendship.

But the book itself is of no importance. It is just a thing finished that was a pleasure to make. If I still think of it with pleasure it is because you so often have been swaggering through its chapters . . . you, my friend of many years, who have so often explored the London haunts and taverns with me. This is its value, that it is yet another link between us. It is one more adventure that we have shared.

Do you remember, Cecil, the night when we set out from Brighton to walk a mad night walk in South Country? Do you remember the churlish landlord of the Fountain Inn at — who refused to replenish our flagons at a minute before we were about to set forth into the night of incalculable adventure? Our first fifteen miles were walked out with a distinct air of bravery, but after that our erring feet found many potholes, and our

first joys of effort had worn off. The night was pitch dark and we became machines—unthinking, mechanical beings, tired and desperate. We lost all sense of direction and wandered miles out of our way. You said, I remember, that you would have walked twice the distance if the roads were paved as well as the Strand. You said that there was as yet no Rudyard Kipling of the paved streets of London. You even suggested that I might be the man to come. Your hankering for raised paths of stone proved you loyal to urban traditions.

The true Londoner loves the feel of flagstones under his feet. They suggest to him swiftness and a certitude of aim . . . they physically protect him . . . they spiritually sustain him. It was Arthur Hugh Clough who longed for the solid paving stones of Piccadilly whilst at sea in a squally wild north-wester :

Do the houses look as upright
As of old they used to be ?
And does nothing seem affected
By the pitching of the sea ?

Ye flags of Piccadilly,
Which I hated so, I vow,
I could wish with all my heart
You were underneath me now !

As far back as 1716 the flagstones of London had their own allurement for John Gay, who wrote :

O bear me to the paths of fair Pall Mall,
Safe are thy pavements, grateful is thy smell !
At distance rolls along the gilded coach,
Nor sturdy carmen on thy walks encroach.

Both of the above poets praise the solid flags of London from a utilitarian point of view, but with you it is different. You see the paved ways of London as roads of glamour and delight and poetry. You argue that Fleet Street must be more poetical than the Roman track which runs up to Chanctonbury Ring, because it has been more intimately blended with the flurry of human emotions . . . because it has become, by long use and homeliness, dear to human hearts. On this point you agree with the first Grand Vizier of London-lovers, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, who hits the nail on the head when he remarks "a London street is more poetical than a meadow, because a street has a secret. A street is going somewhere, and a meadow nowhere."

I think that we both almost know Chesterton's *Napoleon of Notting Hill* by heart, and can feel with that strange character, Adam Wayne, that the artificial city may in time become more satisfying than nature . . . feel that our favourite taverns and streets and gas-lamps are things as ancient and beautiful as the sky.

.

This book is done ; but it is not the thing I dreamed of. It is a distinct other thing. I had hoped to picture you in one of our dear London taverns as my modern Falstaff. . . . I had hoped to project something of your ingrained simplicity, arrogance, and jollity. I had hoped to show something of your quality of royalty as you toweringly pass from Chandos Street along the Strand on your nightly journey to the — Club. I had hoped to tell in broad and bold burlesque

the story of your famous Dickensian pilgrimage ; to tell how you crowned and knighted our old friend B. W. Matz with a shockingly intimate, domestic utensil . . . " Arise, Sir Bertram." But I found such things difficult to express in human language. Separated by the locust years our adventures grow dingy and our miracles seem commonplace.

However, London is still our great, unexplored jungle, and to be a part of her is a never-too-much-to-be-savoured adventure. It was always so. It always will be so. And so to our next meeting with the whispering stones of London beneath our feet, and adventure daintily (or, as the case may be, sinisterly) tip-toeing around the next corner.

R.T.H.

123 Pall Mall.

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CHAPTER I

LONDON PREFERENCES

IN these days London has so enormously increased in size, and the traffic has become so dense and baffling, that few Londoners can hope to obtain an impression of the city as a complete unit. It was far easier thirty years ago to take away a remembered bird's-eye-view of London as a whole. To-day we must be content to take our London in nibbles. What is the London that comes to a man at a distance? What particular impression of the great city pulls at the Londoner's heart-strings when he is in Paris or Chicago or Jerusalem?

Every man will project a different picture on the screen of his memory; some minute layer of London life. Thus the exile's particular view of London may be in the gallery of the Holborn Empire, or the fire brigade headquarters in the Southwark Bridge Road, or Piccadilly. One man would visualize cabaret nights at the Cavour or Ciro's; another might yearn for Camden Town, the glare of kerosene lamps and the marketing crowds of far-away Saturday nights.

There are a million little Londons which are treasured up by a million Londoners all over the world, and yet no two are alike. For each London-lover there is some picture of the great city which springs up

in his memory unbidden, not as a cold, topographical fact, but as a scene etched on his heart.

My London credo would not dwell on any of the great sights of the guide books ; it would not mention any of the clubs and cabarets ; it would not insist on the Houses of Parliament or the Victoria and Albert Museum. No, I should never feel an irresistible heart-hunger for the "sights." And yet it would be difficult for me to say just what my London would mean, what I would accept and reject. It would be a poor man's history of London, with all the history omitted . . . it would be a fool's guide to nowhere. For instance, take Cheapside. Now . . . let me think. I should begin my bill of fare with Pimm's restaurant in Cheapside. I like that little stand-up bar there where you can obtain stunning stout, and superior Stilton cheese and rolls . . . the best rolls in London. There is nothing like Pimm's rolls in the world. Tested with the fingers their golden crust gives forth a crisp, crackling, sharp music which all the bakers in Berlin and Paris could never produce for us. . . .

I like the bookshops in the Charing Cross Road . . . their boxes of twopenny bargains . . . Bishop Heber's *Journey in India* in three gigantic tomes for 2d. . . . Thorp's bookshop in St. Martin's Lane . . . Birrell and Garnett in Gerrard Street (Birrell, son of the author of *Obitua Dicta*, and Garnett, author of *Lady into Fox*).

I like the pubs and bars and beer halls used by authors and actors and journalists . . . the Café Royal, the Monico, the new Gambrinus next door to the Empire, the Chandos, the Duncannon behind the Golden Cross Hotel (with its fascinating Pickwick

paintings on the walls); Roche's, Groom's Coffee House, facing Chancery Lane in Fleet Street; the Armenian Café adjoining the stage door of the Lyric Theatre; "The Man-in-the-Moon" near the Piccadilly Hotel; and Rule's in Maiden Lane.

I like to walk across the tenderly spacious enclosure of Trafalgar Square on a sunny day in June, with the London kids paddling in the fountain pools and the water spouting up into rainbow columns; I like to feel the spray of the water on my face; I like to see the huge stone slabs beneath my feet changing colour with the sun after the rain . . . iridescent and speckled like a trout's back . . . reflecting every mood of sun and cloud.

I like to dive into Soho and walk down Berwick Market on a Saturday night with the slow-moving crowd, between blazing shops and flaring barrows; like to watch bold-eyed huzzies buying silk stockings at the stalls . . . to encounter softly alluring French girls who challenge you with made-up eyes. And permeating all the all-enveloping smell of humanity, cheap perfume, garlic, cigarettes and roasting coffee. . . .

I like to take a bus along Tottenham Court Road to Camden Town and get off at the Brecknock Road for the Caledonian Market on Friday afternoon. Caledonian Market! London's Sargasso Sea where the tides of chance and circumstance throw up the lumber and bric-à-brac of the whole city; a happy hunting-ground for collectors of curios, books, pewter, and plate.

I like the old-fashioned shops in the Burlington Arcade. . . . Edward Ward who sold the first cigarettes in London. I like to stroll into Gunter's shop in

Berkeley Square on a summer morning and savour one of their strawberry ices . . . I like the feeling that this confectioner's shop goes back to 1750 when it was known as the sign of the "Pot and Pine-Apple."

I like to loiter about the car-parking places (don't forget that two hours is the time-limit for leaving a car on a park). . . . St. James's Square with its park for 130 cars ; Lincoln's Inn Fields, 120 cars ; Berkeley Square, 42 cars ; Golden Square, 40 cars.

I like to walk down the old Victorian Strand ; the Strand that used-to-be ; the Strand of George Augustus Sala, Sir Augustus Harris, and hansom-cabs ; I like to loiter palely in Villiers Street and take supper in Merritt's cavernous little bar It is not an unusual experience of mine to find the most mountainous form of Cecil Palmer balanced on a slender creaking stool in Merritt's. C.P. has strayed out of Shakespeare's picture of Falstaff . . . every time he laughs the stool beneath him groans and staggers. One of the impossible sights in London would be G.K.C. and C.P. in Merritt's at the same time ; it would not hold them. C.P. believes in the tonic of laughter . . . "Do laugh," he says, "it is humanity to laugh." Such things go to make up the great, slip-shod, well-matured, mellow London which has claimed my allegiance. Other things than these, no doubt, may be described as the soul of London ; one does not argue or insist. *De gustibus non est disputandum*. . . . Again, one might reel off page after page of preferences, and yet be undecided if any of these irrelevant exterior things counted in the great incomplete harmony of London. To everyone London is

the custodian of something that grips his most intimate instinct. It is a difficult matter to define that something. It is the same with all great cities. Perhaps, after all, it is man's love and yearning for his own kind which draws him to London. By the vast human tides of London a solitary wanderer may be kindled to hope and endeavour . . . he may be inspired by beautiful faces, by the rounded duskiness of a girl's shoulders ; by the cool, grey eyes of a hospital surgeon. . . . Yes, it may be the subtle spirit of the passing humanity which wakes the broken staves of romance in one's heart. Lionel Johnson's inspired interpretation of the beauty and significance of the crowded streets gives this impression :

O grey, O gloomy skies ! What then ?
 Here is a marvellous world of men ;
 More wonderful than Rome was, when
 The world was Rome !
 See the great stream of life flow by !
 Here thronging myriads laugh and sigh,
 Here rise and fall, here live and die :
 In this vast home.

In long array they march toward death,
 Armies, with proud or piteous breath :
Forward ! the spirit in them saith,
 Spirit of life :
 Here the triumphant trumpets blow ;
 Here mourning music sorrows low :
 Victors and vanquished, still they go
 Forward in strife.

Who will not heed so great a sight ?
 Greater than marshalled stars of night,
 That move to music and with light :
 For these are men !

These move to music of the soul ;
Passions, that madden or control :
These hunger for a distant goal,
Seen now and then.

It may be the “ world of men ” . . . where two or three are gathered together, which makes London so friendly. The chief thing to love and understand is man, and where men gather, there is the opportunity to be merry, wise, argumentative, or quarrelsome.

CHAPTER II

LONDON : THE FISHING VILLAGE

OF London, the great city of shops and banks and theatres, everyone knows. Many thousands know her more intimately ; know her night-haunts, wonderful historical spots, and the vast unexplored country of the suburbs. But few know the ancient, original London of long, long ago ; London, the fishing village which flourished before English history began. Who knows the spot where the first Cockney built the first primitive out-of-doors shelter which founded London ? What do we know to-day about our London ancestors who fought panthers and bears with stone axes and netted and speared salmon in the Thames ? What do we know about the Cockney lake-dwellers who lived on the eyots of Battersea, Bermondsey, Rotherhithe, and Kennington ?

What was that ancient London ? Where is it to-day ? These are questions which cannot be easily answered. In fact we can only answer them with many qualifications. To arrive at completeness and absoluteness about that shy, elusive, long-lost London is impossible. We can guess and build up a picture of it. But there is no record.

The more than usually imaginative man may perchance hear a whisper of that little lost London on some black stormy night of winter, borne on the dark

tide of the Thames as it gurgles and swirls along the solid stone walls and monolithic piers of the Embankment.

On such a night, leave the comfortable lights of the shops, theatres, and hotels and make your way to Charing Cross Foot Bridge. Look over the river to where the lights of Waterloo Road and Blackfriars Road send up a glare into the thick gloom of the smoke-choked skies.

Below your feet you hear the mutter of the tide—the voice of the dead centuries. Ever old Father Thames whispers and murmurs. Ever he clutches at the bridges and stone docks with wet fingers. Ever he strives to reach the old marshland where now stands line upon line of houses and shops. But his hands clutch in vain and slip back on the stone-work always worn smooth by swirling water.

It is as if the dead of that unknown London are stretching out ghostly hands to the Babylonian presence that looms viciously out of the darkness—the London of thatched mud huts calling to the London of mighty yard-thick concrete buildings.

But the great London of to-day does not heed the ghost of London past. She is a little ashamed of her first hundred settlers who lived in wattled mud huts and caves. She has done her best to forget her rude and coarse grand-parents.

This real, original London has left not a trace. But we know that it existed . . . we know something of the life and habits of its inhabitants. We know that in its days it was the Charing Cross of Southern England; the hub and radiating point of caravans,

travellers and baggage trains. Fact and tradition is silent regarding the existence of London in the morning of the world, so we cannot put our finger down on some spot on the map of this present-day London, and say definitely, here the first settler dumped his pack and built his shack.

But we hazard that close to where Westminster Abbey now stands London had its real beginning. There may have been clusters of fishermen at Blackfriars, Limehouse and the City, but the real centre of trade and social life was Westminster, or, as it was called by the Saxons, the Isle of Bramble or Thorney Isle. Why then, we may ask, was Thorney the "hub" of prehistoric London?

The explanation is simple enough. Before the Thames was embanked all the land between Battersea and Greenwich was an unbroken marsh which the tidal stream submerged twice in every twenty-four hours. Dry ground was not reached until the beginning of the Surrey Hills were touched beyond Clapham, Brixton and Camberwell. The ancient trader's track ran through Thorney, from the north, over the ford at Westminster, and along to Dover.

Several miles of dangerous bog and marsh had to be faced after and the Thames was forded before a good dry track was reached at Clapham. The traders rested at Thorney for the night in order to tackle this stretch of swamp in the early part of the day, and gradually the Isle of Bramble became a considerable town for the reception of the caravans. Many years after, the ford at Thorney was superseded by a ferry which survived until Westminster Bridge was erected.

The name of the ferry is still preserved in the thoroughfare called Horseferry Road.

All the trade of the north passed through Thorney on its way to the southern ports. The London of to-day which stands on the Thames from Westminster Bridge to Tower Bridge was a low cliff sloping down to mud banks and the river. No merchants or caravans ever penetrated this region. Here and there on these cliffs overhanging the river fishermen lived in huts made of branches of trees wattled with withies and daubed with clay. In some of the huts a growing tree with a straight trunk was used as a main support for the roof beams. We still talk of living under our own roof-tree to-day, just as the Cockney fishers did long ago.

These fishermen were the first London merchants. There can be no disputations on this point. They pushed out the coracles on the river and speared salmon and netted every kind of fish; they trapped the soft-furred beaver, and snared and shot, with sling and stone, geese and ducks. Each day they carried their supplies of fish and game to the markets of Thorney where the merchants and innkeepers eagerly purchased them. After a while, some of the fishermen opened stores at Thorney. What better place for a store than the open square where the horse-caravans put up for the night and refitted? One can well imagine that square at Thorney. One can see the chains of slaves and mules and packhorses and all the changing scene of bustle and animation. Slaves tending tethered ponies and loading and unloading bales and bundles; merchants paying off spearmen

and taking on new guards and servants ; travellers buying dried fish and flat cakes of barley bread ; boys cuffing caravan dogs ; men running everywhere ; swearing, shouting, arguing, and chaffering.

At Thorney the first London inn was constructed. A regular guest-house *de luxe* for those primitive times. There was a paling of thick stakes around it and the inn consisted of small huts built side by side in two rows with narrow alleys running between. Central heating (and cooking) was provided by a fire burning on a large open hearthstone in the centre of the huts. There was a shopping arcade at the entrance to the inn where every necessity for travellers might be purchased. Any morning you might see travellers sorting over the latest thing in fur caps or sandals in the arcade. Here you could buy cooking-pots, strips of leather, flint arrow heads, bows and arrows, wolf-skins, bear-skins and skins of wild horses and cows, rush baskets, sarks, bone needles, and all kinds of foodstuff. Here in a primitive saloon the merchants traded and bartered over cups of heady mead or barley ale.

Once Thorney was established as a kind of caravan-serai, the track which ran from the ford over the marshes to where the Old Kent Road runs, became a well-defined and beaten path. It was indeed very soggy, but every caravan helped to reinforce it with bundles of reeds. Perhaps some of the fishermen from Lambeth Reach constructed roads over the most watery patches and charged a toll, or perhaps the merchants and innkeepers of Thorney constructed a causeway in order to attract traders to use their route.

In any event this track did become a causeway across the marsh to the rising ground of Deptford which was one of the stages on the road to Dover.

The causeway was constructed by driving rows of piles into the mud and filling up the space between with branches, brushwood and gravel. The gravel was probably floated in boats from Chelsea—The Isle of Shingle—and taken across the marsh when the tide gave enough water to float coracles.

Some people think that the Romans built this causeway, but such a supposition is not very convincing. One cannot be satisfied that it is Roman work when one recalls that when the Romans first arrived in this region they found a flourishing town on the north bank of the river where the fishermen had first built their huts. This town was the new "Charing Cross" of the horse-caravans, and the market square at Thorney was already a less important place. The causeway from Thorney had been built and almost abandoned before the Romans appeared.

After some time, but still in the prehistoric period, boat-building made great progress and merchants began to use flat-bottomed skiffs and rafts to carry their goods between Dover and London. Seamen and foreign merchant adventurers sailed their ships up the Thames, and the old Cockney fishermen beheld with amazement strange and heavy craft anchored at the mouth of the Fleet River. The old causeway at Thorney was now almost deserted, and the "new" London established. Sheds and quays were erected along the river, and all kinds of strange foreign goods were landed. Roads were built and the causeway

from a point where London Bridge now stands to Kennington was faced with stone and made permanent. This road to-day survives as the High Street, Borough.

But so far the Thames is still flooding the marshes of Bermondsey and no attempt has been made to build embankments. No bridge across the Thames has yet been constructed. Only a ferry exists to connect London and the Borough causeway.

.

The embankment of the Thames is one of the great London mysteries. How it was done and when it was done has never been revealed by the records and relics of the past. This stupendous work was done almost as effectively and permanently as our modern engineers could now tackle such a task. With the embankment of the north and south banks of the river the marshlands dried up and turned to arable land, orchards and woods.

CHAPTER III

THE BOROUGH

IN the foregoing pages I have endeavoured to show that London was originally a fishing colony with a ford at the adjoining settlement where Westminster Bridge now stands. Then followed the traders with their goods and packhorses, using Thorney Island (Westminster) as a depot and stopping place in making journeys to the South Coast. Later came the Romans and built Watling Street, commencing at Dover, passing through Canterbury and Rochester to London, and thence to Chester and York, and northwards in two branches to Carlisle and the Wall in the neighbourhood of Newcastle. Traces of the ancient road are still to be found in many parts of its course, and in some it is still an important highway; a street in London retains its name. The Watling Street from Chester met the Watling Street from Dover at the ford opposite Thorney. On the Surrey side was a pavement—Stangate—and on the Middlesex side a low hillock to Tothill, which denotes a stopping-place where wayfarers could call—tout—for the ferry. On the building of London Bridge by the Romans traffic through Westminster ceased, and the Watling Street was diverted at what we call the Marble Arch.

The story of all that happened to London and Southwark, between the time the Romans built the first London Bridge and the Norman Conquest, belongs to a book with a wider scope than this. It is for me merely to state that the British and Roman races mixed and became fused into one people; and afterwards Celtic Picts from the North, Celtic Scots from Ireland, Saxons from the shores of North Germany, fierce Danes and Norman free-booters each in turn mixed and were absorbed in the population of London.

Shortly after London Bridge was erected by the Romans the trade and traffic of Thorney having moved to the fishers' colony where Cannon Street now stands, the old original salmon-spearing Londoners found themselves being gradually ousted by all manner of "foreigners" and traders. These upstarts from far-off lands laughed at the fishermen with their wattle huts and coracles; built wooden houses and stone quays, drove paved roads through the marshes, and made it quite clear that they had come to ginger up things on the north side of the river. The London ancients found that the quays were getting too crowded for them and there was no room to dry and mend their nets or prepare their fish. Soon they migrated to the south of the river—to the Embankment of Southwark. Here they hoped to fish and hunt with greater freedom and success, for now the water near the quays was so disturbed by the shipping that already the fish, beavers, and wildfowl were moving to other parts. Therefore Southwark was first the abode of the old breed of London fisherfolk,

and once again we find them setting up their fish-stalls by the cluster of inns which had been put up on the Causeway for the convenience of the merchants and their caravans. It is typical of the persistence of custom that Southwark, a place apart from the busy life of London to-day, should have still retained its long succession of inns up to a few years ago. In the High Street, White Hart Yard only lost its famous inn in 1889; George Yard has a fragment of the "George"; the Tabard Inn, by Talbot Yard, stands upon the site of the famous old "Tabard," the inn which Chaucer makes the starting point for his pilgrims in *The Canterbury Tales*. Queen's Head Yard marks the site of the inn of that name closed in 1895.

For long years the fishermen continued to live in Southwark; they were a stubborn, patient, cool-headed race, and their descendants occupied some of the narrow courts on the south of the river up to the year 1850.

The most convenient starting point for a saunter through the streets and byways of the Borough is London Bridge. Close by the Southwark foot of the bridge was a certain famous tavern called "Bear-at-the-Bridge-Foot," which was pulled down in 1761. It was built in the year 1319 by one Thomas Drinkwater. Samuel Pepys records several visits paid to this tavern, and Colonel Cornelius Cooke, one of Cromwell's officers, was a landlord here. The house was a great resort of the gallants of Charles II's merry reign. Sir John Suckling played bowls here, and wrote here his "Letter from the Wine-drinkers to the Water-drinkers"; also his "Drinking Commended":

Come, let the State stay,
And drink away,
There is no business above it :
It warms the cold brain,
Makes us speak in high strain,
He's a fool that does not approve it.

The Macedon youth
Left behind him this truth,
That nothing is done with much thinking ;
He drank and he fought,
Till he had what he sought :
The world was his own by good drinking.

Here William Wycherley, the courtier and dramatic author, caroused and welcomed his many mistresses.

“ I cannot forbear to mention,” says Major Pack (quoted by Cunningham), “ one piece of gallantry, among many others, that Mr. Wycherley was once telling me they had in those days. It was this. There was a house at the Bridge Foot, where persons of better condition used to resort (you see how distant the scene then laid to what it doth now) for pleasure and privacy. The liquor the ladies and their lovers used to drink at those meetings was canary ; and among other compliments the gentlemen paid their mistresses, this it seems was always one, to take hold of the bottom of their smocks, and pouring the wine through that filter, so drink a health to the toast. Surely a filthy as well as indecent custom ! ”

When the beautiful Frances Stewart, to escape the dishonouring attentions of Charles II, accepted the proffered hand of the Duke of Richmond, she stole from her apartments on a stormy night in March,

1667, and joined the Duke at this tavern, where a carriage was waiting, and they drove away to Cobham, to be married on the following morning by the Duke's chaplain.

There are several important references to the bridge in *Oliver Twist*, but I suppose the most familiar literary reference to it is contained in that old rhyme "London Bridge is Broken Down." The various renderings of this rhyme are referred to at some length in Thomson's *The Chronicles of London Bridge* (London, 1827), and at later dates antiquaries have endeavoured to ascertain which is the first form, and trace their origin. A Mr. M. Green, in a letter to the *Gentlemen's Magazine*, September, 1823, gives the following rendering :—

London Bridge is broken down ;
 Dance over the Lady Lee.
 London Bridge is broken down,
 With a gay lady.
 Then we must built it up again.
 What shall we build it up withal ?
 Build it up with iron and steel ;
 Iron and steel will bend and break.
 Build it up with wood and stone ;
 Wood and stone will fall away.
 Build it up with silver and gold ;
 Silver and gold will be stolen away,
 Then we must set a man to watch.
 Suppose the man should fall asleep ;
 Then we must put a pipe in his mouth.
 Suppose the pipe should fall and break ;
 Then we must set a dog to watch.
 Suppose the dog should run away ;
 Then we must chain him to a post.

When the bridge was being widened in 1902 there

was much wordy warfare in the newspapers concerning the true source and form of these stanzas. One correspondent pointed out that it was first printed in *Gammer Gurton's Garland* (London, 1810), although a familiar nursery rhyme for many years before. Thomson mentions a Mr. J. Evans, of Bristol, who had seen children "sing the rhyme and dance to the simple melody one moonlight night in Bristol about forty years ago" (1780).

Just at the corner of the bridge on the Surrey bank, lying near Southwark Cathedral, are the steps mentioned by Dickens as being the spot where Nancy has an interview with Rose Maylie and Mr. Brownlow.

Whenever I notice the seagulls wheeling over the Thames I am strongly reminded of all that we Londoners see each day without any feeling of true appreciation. In the routine of trades and occupations the miracles of London become stale and we call them commonplace. We become morbid, dispirited, and irritable, and for weeks together we forget one of our greatest privileges—the privilege of living in the most beautiful and historic city in the world.

I always think that the wind blows across our bridges on the Thames with all the salt and savour of the sea. It is natural that the sea winds should spell romance to London folk, for the sea has always been the cradle of their activities and is still the source of their strength. Of no other great city can this be said with such truth and significance. The Italian and the Spanish people lost their inheritance in the sea centuries ago; the German lost much of his maritime power in the Great War, and the French have never

really taken full advantage of their chances to become a nation of seafarers. But the people of London cling tenaciously to their rights as seafarers. Their ancestors who built the first huts from which the great city afterwards developed were a group of fishermen and sailors, so in the blood of London-born folk there runs a strange fascination of the sea and ships—even in the blood of those who have never seen salt water. Truly speaking, the sea is not only our supremacy . . . it is our existence. London would shrivel up if her highway to the ocean became blocked.

Yes, as you stand on London Bridge on a bright spring morning, there is something in our great primitive river that seems to speak of that wide, wild-sounding ocean beyond the distant towns. I have long been convinced that the London Spring makes her entry into the city from the Thames. Every Londoner knows that first real spring day when the April sunshine dances on the wide river, turning all common things into miracles . . . that day when the wind of romance sows the madness of spring-fret broadcast, and sets the old Divine frenzy of Youth working within our sickly hearts. On such a day, standing on one of our great bridges, you “smell” the strength and mystery and romance of London. If you are a true Londoner you will understand what I mean, but if not I am afraid that it would be impossible to explain this evasive and mysterious atmosphere. I only know that the salt and savour of the sea has something to do with the sprightliness of London. One must accept, then, that the sea stands for youth and romance, and always will.

No one who has read the novels of H. G. Wells can forget the joyous enthusiasm with which he dwells upon the noble prospect of the Thames from the great bridges. In *Ann Veronica* there is a notable passage dealing with Waterloo Bridge :

“ The river, the big buildings on the north bank, Westminster, and St. Paul’s, were rich and wonderful with the soft sunshine of London, the softest, the finest-grained, the most penetrating and least emphatic sunshine in the world. The very carts and vans and cabs that Wellington Street poured out incessantly upon the bridge seemed ripe and good in her eyes. A traffic of copious barges slumbered over the face of the river—barges either altogether stagnant or dreaming along in the wake of fussy tugs ; and above circled, urbanely voracious, the London seagulls. She had never been there before at that hour, in that light, and it seemed to her as if she came to it all for the first time. And this great mellow place, this London, now was hers, to struggle with, to go where she pleased in, to overcome and live in. ‘ I’m glad,’ she told herself, ‘ I came.’ ”

The supreme difference between Paris and London, as cities, is greatly ruled by their rivers. In Paris the Seine seems to be a capricious incident that one forgets between each visit, whereas to the Thames the City of London is an upstart and an intruder. Paris dominates the Seine ; the Thames dominates London. A Frenchman in the *Cornhill Magazine* (Vol. VI, 1862) writes on the points of contrast between the two great rivers as follows :—

“The Seine is graceful, whimsical, and, so to speak, feminine. She has scarcely anything to do but to look up at the skies, play with the pleasure-boats, and give back to the eye the great wharves, the Tuileries, the Louvre, and the tall towers of Notre Dame. But how different the Thames! Scarcely has the English river passed Richmond, smiled at the swans, and paid its respects to the towering Houses of Parliament, than lo! it finds itself already in the busy part of London, and begins to be a real working river. No matter if its waters are shaken up a good deal, and sometimes as dark as ink—no matter; for it helps in making these citizens’ fortunes, and bears away towards the sea the impurities of the city, as Time carries to Eternity the dust and soil of human life, leaving behind only the traces of good deeds and service done. The charm of the Thames lies in its usefulness; its pride is ‘to forward business.’”

The seagulls form another link with London and the sea. What could be more in keeping with the sea-spell of the Thames than these beautiful birds? Does it not seem a remarkable thing that these birds, true offspring of the untamable seas should overcome their timidity enough to fly into the heart of our great city and trustfully feed from our hands? I remember when I first trudged to a city office over London Bridge each morning how the gulls circled and swooped and cried above my head. Frequently I would buy a bag of sprats to feed them, and it was astonishing how the birds would quickly guess that I had food for them. They would line up in a long

chain swooping within reach of my hand, each one catching a sprat with faultless precision. They seemed to have some settled method of lining up for the sprats, and it was seldom that one of them tried to jostle another or volplane down on me out of turn. The great line of birds always sweeping past and taking a circle back to their places was most fascinating to see . . . the impression it made on me I have never forgotten. The sweeping harmony of the gulls, the flash of the silvery sprats, and the great rolling tide of the Thames . . . there was something in the scene that pulled at my heart-strings. The call of the sea . . . or was it the call of youth? Who can tell?

Leaving London Bridge we arrive at Southwark Cathedral in a few steps. Many remarkable men rest here. . . . The name of the great dramatist, Massinger, of whom there is the pathetic entry in the register: "Philip Massinger d. March 30, 1640. Stranger" is carved on a stone in the chancel floor. Two contiguous stones read:

JOHN FLETCHER

1625

EDMOND SHAKESPEARE

DIED

1607.

The memorial slabs are quite modern and are placed in the chancel because the whereabouts of the remains are not known.

Visitors should note a perfect oak effigy (date about 1300) of an unknown Crusader. It is possibly one of

the de Warennnes who held Lewes Castle till the fourteenth century, and were patrons of this church.

On the left of the north transept is the imposing tomb of John Gower, the poet who died in 1402.

Stowe minutely describes the monument, and as it has been repainted it looks just the same still.

“ He lieth under a tomb of stone, with his image, also of stone, over him ; the hair of his head, auburn, long to his shoulders . . . on his head a chaplet like a coronet of four roses ; a collar of gold about his neck, under his head the likeness of the three books (*Speculum Meditantis*, *Vix Clamantis*, and *Confessio Amantis*) which he compiled.”

Between the pillars of the choir the visitor will notice the alabaster tomb of Alderman Humble and his two wives. The following lines inscribed here are attributed to Francis Quarles, who, like Ben Jonson, was Chronologer to the City of London :—

Like to the damask rose you see,
Or like the blossoms on the tree,
Or like the dainty flowers of May,
Or like the morning of the day,
Or like the sun, or like the shade,
Or like the gourd which Jonas had,
E'en so is Man, whose thread is spun,
Drawn out and cut, and so is done.

It was from the roof of the Tower of St. Saviour's that Wenceslaus Hollar, a native of Prague, made his celebrated drawings of London both before and after the Great Fire. A rack containing many finely-carved bosses from old vault-ribs may be seen near the chancel. The carvings date from 1469, and show some

fantastic human and animal forms, and comically distorted faces.

One class of working men who took up their abode around this church were the Thames watermen—they were driven across the river in the early days of London's extension. Many of them must have been buried here and I set myself to hunt through the monuments. I found the vault of the Boatwright family, which sounded like the persistence of a water-side trade from father to son for many generations. After this I cast my line again into the sea where hooks are names and fish are incised stone slabs. I drew in and found to my delight a real waterman's memorial. A Royal waterman! I had not dared to hope for such a choice example. Picture my excitement when, on kneeling before an old tablet fixed low against the wall, I read the following inscription: "NICHOLAS NORMAN—WATERMAN TO THE KINGS MAJESTIE : BYRYED 25 MAY, 1629."

Retracing your way through the churchyard, and ascending the steps, you cross the Borough High Street, and enter St. Thomas's Street on the left. Until 1865 St. Thomas's Hospital reached up to this thoroughfare. I was told that I should find a former entrance to the hospital in a terrace of eighteenth-century houses on the left, and walking a short distance down the street I found it. Yes, it was still there . . . a magnificent old doorway enriched with carved jambs and ornamented porch. Once it carried a fine wrought-iron gate, but now a panelled oak door has been fitted. A few steps farther along brings you to the gates of Guy's Hospital on the right. In the

centre of the outer court will be seen the smoke-grained statue of the Hospital's founder, Thomas Guy, who was the son of a lighterman and coal-dealer, was born in Fair Street, Horselydown, near the Thames, in 1644. He began business in 1668 in the angle formed by Cornhill and Lombard Street, as a bookseller with a stock of about £200, dealing extensively in the importation of English Bibles from Holland (those printed at home being executed very badly); and, on this being stopped, he contracted with the University of Oxford for the privilege of printing Bibles, which he continued to do for many years. By this means, and by selling out his original shares in South Sea Stock at a great advantage, he amassed a fortune of nearly half a million sterling.

He gave vast sums of money to charity, built wards in St. Thomas's Hospital, and set apart £250,000 for the building and endowment of Guy's. He was also a liberal benefactor to Christ's Hospital and the Stationers' Company. He died in 1724, and it is said that he was of mean appearance, with a melancholy expression of countenance, and during his whole lifetime had no other reputation than that of an intensely selfish and avaricious man.

Pressing along High Street once more we may pause before No. 71 (The Argosy Restaurant) to look at a little sculptured stone tablet in the front of this building. It shows a leaping hare beneath the sun. This is a punning allusion to Nicholas Hare and his son who carried on a grocery business at this shop in 1676. A dozen or so steps farther is George Yard. Here the visitor will be greatly cheered by the sight

of a double tier of bedroom galleries, faced with rows of fat, dumpy balusters. This is the remaining fragment of the George Inn which dates from 1676. It was erected on the site of a far older inn called in a deed of 1544 the "Saint George." The dormer windows and high-pitched tiled roof gives the "George" a pleasing sky-line. It seems a pity that part of the building should be used as a L.N.E.R. Goods Office, but we must be thankful that the Railway Company during their great pick and shovel offensive on the original building in 1889 even spared a wing where we may still drink ale and pray for the kindly soul of Charles Dickens.

It is typical of the persistence of custom that for hundreds of years the watermen and actors have lived on the south side of the Thames. Even up to thirty years ago the majority of well-known music-hall artistes, professional singers, and actors were to be found living around Brixton and Camberwell, and up to this very day those men who work in a world of cargoes, cordage, boats, and wharves are, for the most part, dwellers in South London. In the days of Shakespeare the watermen were dependent on the Bankside Theatres for a part of their trade.

The people who crossed from the Middlesex side on pleasure excursions to the theatres were their principal customers.

In 1613, after the burning of the Globe, the Company of Watermen petitioned the King "that the players might not be permitted to have a playhouse in London or in Middlesex within 4 miles of the city on that side of the Thames." Taylor, the water-poet,

warmly advocated his fellows' cause. He wrote a pamphlet to support their petition, setting forth that the watermen and those dependent on them between Windsor and Gravesend number about forty thousand, and that their "golden stirring," consequent upon the players' settlement on Bankside, with the withdrawal of many of the men to serve in the Spanish wars, had been much reduced by the peace and the departure of the players from Surrey-side.

As actors, sailors, and watermen congregated at Southwark it is not surprising that the three callings were often joined in business concerns. Philip Henslowe, a stage-manager in Shakespeare's time, joined in a venture with Jacob Meade, a waterman, to control the Hope Theatre. When Henslowe died Meade showed that he was a man of undoubted wealth, for he engaged in a protracted dispute with Edward Alleyn (the Founder of Dulwich College) in respect of the Bear-Garden leases and Henslowe's personal estate, including bears, bulls, and dogs, "nott by hym bequeathed," as is set forth in Alleyn's autograph statement preserved at Dulwich College.

Probably Shakespeare gained most of his knowledge of the sea and a seaman's life from the seafaring men of Southwark. He lived for some months on Bankside, near the Bear-Garden; the customary mode of going to and from the Surrey-side was by taking boat at the countless stairs along both sides of the River Thames. Most, if not all, of the watermen, or "scullers," were old sailors and associates of sailors below bridge.

Here along the banks of the Thames were many

river-side taverns with projecting balconies and snug taprooms where sea-captains, pirates, and sea-rovers met to drink and exchange news of the shipping trade. We may well assume that Shakespeare was often present at the shore meetings of these seafarers and heard them recalling old escapades and discussing two topics of unending interest—the merits of their respective vessels and the mutinous character of their crews. It is possible that some of the old sea-rovers amended Shakespeare's nautical passages.

Where the High Street is intersected by Marshalsea Road and Great Dover Street stands St. George's Church. The present building was erected 1733-6 on the site of a very ancient edifice. "In the churchyard were buried the notorious Bonner, Bishop of London, 1569; and John Rushworth, clerk to the Long Parliament, author of the valuable *Collections of State Papers*, etc., known by his name. In the old church were married Lilly the astrologer, and General Monk (Duke of Albemarle) to Nan Clarges."

The churchyard is divided from the church by the roadway leading to Long Lane. Tabard Street, almost opposite the churchyard, was considered one of the most disorderly and turbulent thoroughfares in London about thirty years ago. I remember it was called Kent Street at that period.

Plunge into any of the back streets in the neighbourhood and you are looking upon a dim, great, faded picture. You hear a faint voice coming from old times. Everything suggests gloom and shadow. A place of half life. Charles Dickens felt the gloom and shadow of old Southwark, and it will be remembered

that in his boyhood, during the pecuniary skirmishes of his father, he lodged in a back attic in Lant Street.

He wrote :

“ It is a bye-street, and its dullness is soothing. A house in Lant Street would not come within the denomination of a first-rate residence, in the strict acceptance of the term, but it is a most desirable spot, nevertheless. If a man wished to abstract himself from the world, to remove himself from within the reach of temptation, to place himself beyond the possibility of any inducement to look out of the window, he should by all means to go Lant Street.”

On the door of 53 Lant Street is a tablet marked “ Dickens House ”—some tenant having drawn the long-bow and claimed the house as the one to which Dickens alluded in *Little Dorrit*. Anyway, the house has a Dickensian-looking doorway with a notable key-stone mask and a deep porch which is alone worth a visit. Opposite “ Dickens House ” is a queer little yard paved with worn cobbles which must have been old when Dickens lodged in Lant Street.

Dickens’s pen-picture of a back street in Southwark is just as representative of the slackened life of the place to-day as it was when Dickens wrote it. Here there is a mustiness in the atmosphere. It is an ancient place broken and dreaming apart. In the old days it lived with the full life of its actors, tumblers, and show folk ; its balladmongers, bearwards, glee-men, poets, dancers and jugglers. . . . In the old days Southwark lived with a turbulent and reckless disregard of conventional manners, and called to her heart London’s

first band of bohemians—the musicians, mummers, and playwrights of the Bankside Theatres. But now the old streets are silent and dim and wraith-like.

Even to-day there is a startling contrast between the City and Southwark. About Southwark is a vagueness and a sadness. It is a place of the past. A melancholy, indefinite place which has never really lived with its true vigour since the days when Christopher Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Sir Walter Raleigh walked its streets and gossiped in its taverns.

I turned into the churchyard of St. George the Martyr to see the old walls of the Marshalsea Prison. As I entered the attendant leaned out of his little watch-box. He kept his eye fixed on my camera. He remarked that it was a lovely morning. Was I after the Dickens landmarks?

I replied that I was “kinder inspectin’ round,” as the film studio people say.

The attendant said he fancied it must be nice to go “inspecting about like.” It must be nice to have money to spend and time to waste. I told him I had more time to spend than money . . . and very little of either to use extravagantly.

“This little garden o’ mine is a nice enough place in its way,” said the attendant, “but, lor bless you, these gravestones seem to put a kind of blight into a chap’s heart. You don’t laugh much when you have looked after stones and bones for twenty years or so. Stones and bones . . . stones and bones. Look at ’em! Stone coffins . . . stone skeletons . . . skulls and cross-bones. . . .”

The attendant led the way to the wall which divides

the graveyard from the factory of Messrs. Harding and Sons, where there is an inscription which tells the visitor that this building once formed a part of Marshalsea Prison. Just near the gardener's hut in the corner by the watch-box a section of the brickwork has been cut away, showing the immense thickness of the old prison wall.

I asked my guide if he could tell me if Little Dorrit's garret still existed.

"Yes," he said, pointing to a dormer-window peeping from the top of the extreme left of the building as we faced the wall. "That room is generally regarded as Little Dorrit's garret, and the house standing in the corner above my watch box is said to have been the residence of the Governor of the Marshalsea."

Opposite St. George's Church runs Marshalsea Road, and the second turning on the right along this street is Harrow Street. At the end of the street is a lodging-house referred to by Dickens as the Old Farm House in his *Reprinted Pieces*. Dickens writes: "It is the old manor house of these parts, and stood in the country once . . . the long paved yard was a paddock or a garden once or a court in front of the farmhouse."

The old lodging-house is easily recognized by its dormer windows and external staircase, and a close inspection shows the building to date back some hundreds of years. It is now empty, but for nearly sixty years, right up to the Great War, it was a common lodging-house. Henry Mayhew, in his book *The London Street-Folk* (1851) writes:

"Of lodging-houses for 'travellers' the largest

is known as the Farm House, in the Mint : it stands away from any thoroughfare, and, lying low, is not seen until the visitor stands in the yard. Traditional rumour states that the house was at one time Queen Anne's, and was previously Cardinal Wolsey's. It was probably some official residence. In this lodging-house are forty rooms, 200 beds (single and double), and accommodation for 200 persons. It contains three kitchens—of which the largest, at once kitchen and sitting-room, holds 400 people, for whose uses in cooking there are two large fire-places. The other two kitchens are used only on Sundays ; when one is a preaching-room, in which missionaries from Surrey Chapel (the Rev. James Sherman's), or some minister or gentleman of the neighbourhood, officiates. The other is a reading-room, supplied with a few newspapers and other periodicals ; and thus, I was told, the religious and irreligious need not clash. For the supply of these papers each person pays 1d. every Sunday morning ; and as the sum so collected is more than is required for the expenses of the reading-room, the surplus is devoted to the help of the members in sickness, under the management of the proprietor of the lodging-house, who appears to possess the full confidence of his inmates. The larger kitchen is detached from the sleeping apartments, so that the lodgers are not annoyed with the odour of the cooking of fish and other food consumed by the poor ; for in lodging-houses every sojourner is his own cook. The meal in most demand is tea, usually with a herring, or a piece of bacon.

“The yard attached to the Farm House, in Mint Street, covers an acre and a half ; in it is a washing-house, built recently, the yard itself being devoted to the drying of the clothes—washed by the customers of the establishment. At the entrance to this yard is a kind of porter’s lodge, in which reside the porter and his wife who act as the ‘deputies’ of the lodging-house. This place has been commended in sanitary reports for its cleanliness, good order, and care for decency, and for a proper division of the sexes. On Sundays there is no charge for lodging to known customers ; but this is a general practice among the low lodging-houses of London.”

W. H. Davies, the tramp-poet, lived at the Farm House for some years at the rate of two shillings a week. From here he published a book of poems which attracted the attention of Bernard Shaw, who was also puzzled by the rural address. Evidently Shaw’s knowledge of London topography was not extensive !

Near the Farm House is a children’s recreation enclosure, now called Little Dorrit’s Playground, and from here we may pass along Falcon Court and under the archway of “The Grapes” tavern back to Borough High Street.

Between Union Street and Mint Street, opposite St. George’s Church, stood, till about the year 1870, an old and well-known inn, called “The Catherine Wheel.” It was a famous inn for carriers during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. “The ‘Catherine Wheel,’” writes Mr. Larwood, “was formerly a very common sign, most likely adopted from its being

the badge of the order of the knights of St. Catherine of Mount Sinai, formed in the year 1063, for the protection of pilgrims on their way to and from the Holy Sepulchre. Hence it was a suggestive, if not an eloquent, sign for an inn, as it intimated that the host was of the brotherhood, although in a humble way, and would protect the traveller from robbery in his inn—in the shape of high charges and exactions—just as the knights of St. Catherine protected them on the high road from robbery by brigands. These knights wore a white habit embroidered with a Catherine-wheel (i.e., a wheel armed with spikes), and traversed with a sword, stained with blood. There were also mysteries in which St. Catherine played a favourite part, one of which was acted by young ladies on the entry of Queen Catherine of Aragon (queen to our Henry VIII) in London in 1501. In honour to this queen the sign may occasionally have been put up. The Catherine-wheel was also a charge in the 'Turners' arms. Flecknoe tells us in his *Enigmatical Characters* (1658), that the Puritans changed it into the Cat and Wheel, under which it is still to be seen on a public-house at Castle Green, Bristol."

The Bethlehem Royal Hospital in the Lambeth Road, stands on a site which was once used by the "Dog and Duck" pleasure grounds. This inn was a haunt of low and vicious characters and the brutal diversion of duck-hunting, which was carried on here, less than two centuries ago, in a pond or ponds in the grounds attached to the house. The fun of the sport consisted in seeing the duck make its escape from the dog's mouth by diving. It was much practised in the

neighbourhood of London till it went out of fashion, being superseded by pigeon-shooting, and other pastimes equally cruel. In the seventeenth century the place was celebrated for its springs. The "Dog and Duck," in its later days, bore but a bad repute as a regular haunt of thieves and of other low characters. After a long existence, during which it frequently figured in connection with trials for highway robbery and other crimes, it was suppressed by the order of the magistrates. Garrick thus alludes to the tavern and its tea-gardens in his Prologue to the *Maid of the Oaks*, 1774 :

St. George's Fields, with taste of fashion struck,
Display Arcadia at the "Dog and Duck" ;
And Drury misses here, in tawdry pride,
Are there "Pastoras" by the fountain side.

Larwood in his *History of Signboards* has the following interesting note on the "Dog and Duck" Inn :—

"It was a very small public-house till Hedger's mother took it ; she had been a barmaid to a tavern-keeper in London, who at his death left her his house. Her son Hedger was then a postboy to a yard at Epsom, I believe, and came to be master there. After making a good deal of money, he left the house to his nephew, one Miles, who, though it still went in Hedger's name, was to allow him £1,000 a year out of the profits ; and it was he that allowed the house to acquire so bad a character that the licence was taken away. I have this from one William Nelson, who was servant to old Mrs. Hedger, and remembers the house before he had it.

He is now (1826) in the employ of the Lamb Street Water-Works Company, and has been for thirty years. In particular, there never was any duck-hunting since he knew the gardens ; therefore, if ever, it must have been in a very early time indeed. Hedger, I am told, was the first person who sold the water. In 1787, when Hedger applied for a renewal of his licence, the magistrates of Surrey refused."

The " water " sold by Hedger came from a well in the grounds, celebrated for its purgative qualities. The old sign of the " Dog and Duck " is preserved under glass in a wall of the Bethlehem Royal Hospital. It represents a dog squatting on its haunches with a duck in its mouth, and bears the date 1716.

There are several of the old Southwark merchants' houses left in Union Street. At No. 16 and No. 18 there are ample and largely-founded houses with dignified doors, relieved with carved posts and curious iron lamp-brackets.

CHAPTER IV

THE INWARDNESS OF INN SIGNS

A SELECTION of London inns, and only a selection, this book can embrace. The countless inns and taverns of London would fill many huge tomes. Doubtless I shall be scolded for omissions and perhaps for some of the obscure ale-houses I have included, but since it is an impossible task to satisfy everybody, the most sensible plan appears to be that of taking zigzag courses in and about London and following one's own preferences without further apology.

It has been well said that "the history of its taverns is the history of London; to know one is to know the other," and it might also be said that a small history of London could be written from its inn signs. As a matter of fact the origin of inn signboards also takes us into the by-ways of literature, heraldry, navigation, art, and industry. To make these beacons for the land travellers attractive and novel many strange devices have been laid under tribute. Some of the emblems adopted were homely, some quaint, some waggish, but most of them were meant to be straight to the point and easily recognized and remembered by the unlearned wayfarers as well as wealthy merchants and travellers. Few of the original ancient signs remain, and the oldest of those which have been

saved are in our museums, and most of these seem to be of a simple and unpretending kind. Archæologists and students were not willing to accept these simple signs for what they proclaimed, and into their humble symbols they wove fantastic meanings. Such wise men, when they saw a cat and a fiddle painted on a sign-board of a country inn, grew into wild things and swayed hither and thither, crying, "What can this mean? What can it be? The mummied cat of Pasht? Puss-in-Boots? Whittington's Cat? The cat and fiddle of the sorceress? Is there anything we have not thought of?"

And so they swayed and wondered until they died and were buried comfortably. Other wise men sprung up speculating with every variety and ingenuity what could be the meaning of a cat and a fiddle displayed on an inn sign in juxtaposition. And they followed on the old trail, by taking something they saw as plain as a pike-staff, as the saying is, and carrying it as far as ever their imagination could stretch.

The nursery rhyme :

Hey diddle diddle,
The cat and the fiddle.

was altogether too simple as a solution.

One explanation they offered was that it may have originated with a certain *Caton fidèle*, a staunch Protestant, in the reign of Queen Mary, and only have been changed into the cat and fiddle by corruption; if this is so, it must have lost its original appellation very early, for in 1689 we find "Henry Carr, signe of the Catte and Fidle in the Old Chaunge."

Another declared it was named by a Frenchman after his favourite cat—"Le chat fidèle"—and the appellation subsequently became anglicized into the familiar "Cat and Fiddle." To all of which I say fiddlesticks! The cat and the fiddle are both symbols, and why look for any far-fetched explanations? Do not such things conjure up the very picture of comfort and jollity which every landlord would wish to communicate to the wayfarer . . . ?

The cat basking in the light and warmth of the log fire . . . the inglenook . . . the jolly music of the fiddle. Cannot the cat and fiddle stand alone and unaided by pedantry ?

The symbol of the compasses seems to have been appended to many of the most commonplace inn signs, which must rather discourage the idea that the Goat and Compasses is a corruption of the Puritanical phrase "God encompasseth us." Thus we have a Salmon and Compasses at Peterborough, and a Square and Compasses at Gloucester.

The Three Compasses is a frequent sign in French, German, and Dutch, as well as English inns. The inn of that name in Grosvenor Row, Pimlico, was formerly called the "Goat and Compasses," for which a writer has suggested the following origin :—

"At Cologne, in the Church of St. Maria di Capitolio, is a flat stone on the floor professing to be the 'Grabstein der Bruder und Schwester eines Ehrbahren Wein und Fass Ampts, Anno 1693.' That is, as I suppose, a vault belonging to the Wine Coopers' Company. The Arms exhibit a shield with a pair of compasses, an axe, and a dray or

truck with goats for supporters. In a country like England, dealing so much at one time in Rhenish wine, a more likely origin for such a sign could hardly be imagined."

In *The London Signs and their Associations*, by J. Holden MacMichael, there is the following note on the Bag of Nails sign.

"A good deal of unsatisfactory evidence has been adduced in the endeavour to show that this sign is a corruption of the 'Bacchanals.' . . . It is Christopher Brown, in his *Tavern Anecdotes*, 1825, who is responsible for this statement, one which has been repeated by the authors of both the *History of Signboards* and *Old and New London*. But the Bag of Nails is a very old sign, common still, I believe, in the Midlands, and the reverse seems to be the case—that the 'Bacchanals' in Arabella Row, Pimlico, was a perverted form of the Bag o' Nails. At all events, there was a 'Bag of Nails' in Tuttle Street (Tothill Street), Westminster, so early as 1668, as will be seen by a reference to No. 1191 of the Beaufoy tokens, upon the reverse of which, in the field, between the initials and date, is represented a bag of nails, bearing the armorial charge of the Smiths' arms, which is three hammers each surmounted by a crown, but on the token only one hammer and crown are represented. The only connexion, other than that of sound, which one can conceive as existing between a 'bag o' nails' and 'bacchanals,' is that of the nail which the too bibulously disposed are said to drive into their own coffin."

There is one other possible explanation of the Bag of Nails sign—apart, that is, from the assignable cause as to its having been an invitational carpenters' or other mechanics' sign—the amuletic value of old iron, especially which survives with astonishing vitality to this day. It was customary to store old nails, and although I do not know of a bag being used, I myself once possessed a stoneware jug of the Stuart period which was dug up at the threshold of an old dwelling. This was half full of rusty nails and matted hair, and seems to have been deliberately placed in the position found as a protection from the machination of the evil spirits. The Irish used to hang about children's necks a crooked nail, or horseshoe. It seems possible that the sign of the Bag of Nails, therefore, had its origin in this popular belief. It is, at all events, not likely to have had any trade signification, as the carpenters, joiners, etc., all had their proper companies' arms, which were invariably employed as signs when the patronage of any particular trade warranted their use by the tavern-keeper.

The Cock is a sign commonly met with, and the carved wooden sign of the "Cock" Tavern at No. 22 Fleet Street is a classic example. The brightly-gilded cock which is displayed on the front of the tavern is a copy of the original—the carved wooden sign may be seen in a public room on the first floor. The "Cock" Inn at Llandaff has the following anecdote attached to it. Trade not being too brisk the landlord decided to stir up interest in his house by changing the subject of the sign. He accordingly put up a portrait of the Bishop of Llandaff, and called the house by that name.

A rival in the neighbourhood thought he saw his way to make fresh customers by this change, and straight-way altered the sign of his inn to the Cock, with good results. Landlord number one, hearing of this, was greatly exasperated, and by way of checkmating his adversary he had painted up under the Bishop's portrait, "This is the Old Cock!"

Again we read: "'The Bull and Gate,' in Holborn, at which Tom Jones alighted when he first came to London, probably took its name from Boulogne Gate. The Bull and Mouth—a frequent sign—is a corruption of Boulogne Mouth, and both, no doubt, were intended as compliments to Henry VIII, who took Boulogne in 1544."

There is a Bull and Mouth sign in the Guildhall Museum, and this is said to represent Milo, the Cretonian, who slew an ox with his fist and ate it at one meal.

Other far-fetched folk-etymologies have corrupted "Bacchanals" into "Bag o' Nails" (or vice versa), the "Catherine Wheel" into "Cat and Wheel," and, more dubiously, "God encompasseth" into "Goat and Compasses," and "Piga wassail" (A.S., "Virgin, hail," or "a lass and a glass") into "Pig and Whistle."

Now, should any man dare to say that the "Barley Mow" means exactly what it reads and not "La Belle Amour" he is looked upon as a lunatic. Lord, what a strange world it is! Once a man goes mad and says outrageous things he at once becomes a savant or a prophet!

A curious sign was once to be seen on the Old Bath Road; but it has long ago disappeared. It was a wild

and rampageous white horse with the following verse beneath it :—

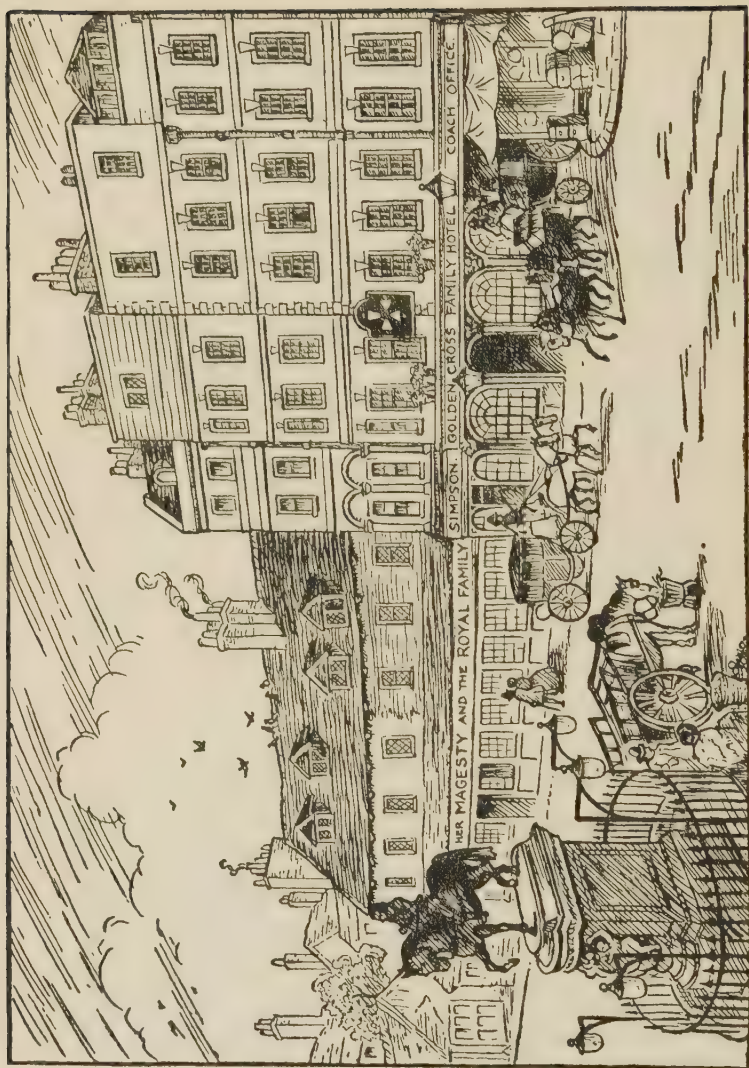
My *White Horse* shall beat the *Bear*,
And make the *Angel* fly,
Shall turn the *Ship* quite bottom up,
And drink the *Three Cups* dry.

The origin of the verse was that a poverty-stricken poet put up at the inn, and after living riotously there on the best of food and wine for a month, could not meet his bill when it was presented. Boniface fell on the poet with epithets and a horse whip, whereupon the poet to appease him said that he would write some lines on his signboard which would attract many customers and oust all his competitors. The other inns in the verse were, of course, rivals of the "White Horse."

In the basement of the London Museum may be seen several interesting inn signs removed from demolished houses in London. The "Blackamoor's Head" Inn in Whitcomb Street I have mentioned elsewhere in this book, but among the relics congregated at the London Museum is a sculptured stone which is an elaborate specimen of this sign. It shows too very woolly Blackamoors' Heads with the initials S.W.M. and the date 1715. This stone was intended to represent the crest of the Holles Family. A fine eighteenth-century Man in the Moon sign from Holywell Street, and a gilded Lock and Key sign which was displayed outside a house in Bartholomew Close until it was destroyed in a Zeppelin Raid on September 8th, 1915, are also to be viewed at the London Museum.

Very attractive, and little regarded, are some of the names of London's obscurer inns. As to the "World's End," near Milman Street, Chelsea, it is altogether too mystic for this workaday world. It should be placed in the hazy topography of the "City of Beautiful Nonsense," "Never Never Land," and "Goblin Market"—on that shadowy chart of the Valley of Bliss, which, like heaven, is not so much a topographical fact as it is the vesture of a gentle soul. However, the "World's End" to-day shatters all dreams. It is drab and commonplace. Yet we cannot deny its claims on literature and romance, for it was a noted house of entertainment in the reign of Charles II. The tea-gardens and grounds were extensive, and elegantly fitted up. The house was probably called the "World's End," on account of its then considerable distance from London, and the bad state of the roads and pathways leading to it. It figures in a dialogue in Congreve's *Love for Love* in a manner which implies that it bore no very high character.

The "Golden Cross" at the Charing Cross is usually pointed out as the house from which Mr. Pickwick and his friends set forth in 1827, and this statement has frequently been given the impressiveness of print in various guide-books. Nevertheless, this is incorrect. Nay, come nearer. Neither the building nor its site can be reconciled with the original Pickwickian inn. All that can be said is that the statement is the production of a slipshod topographer. In 1827 the Strand came up to King Charles' statue, and, of course, Trafalgar Square, or any open space, did not exist.



THE GOLDEN CROSS HOTEL IN 1750

The Nelson Column was erected on this spot in 1843. The equestrian statue of Charles II still remains on its original site

At the rear of King Charles's monument stood the original Golden Cross, and we may take the place now occupied by Nelson's south-eastern lion as the exact spot where the ancient inn was first built in 1603. The "Golden Cross" referred to by Dickens, was an early eighteenth-century posting-house which supplanted the ancient building. The Pickwickian inn was demolished in 1828, and yet another "Golden Cross" was set up on this site. This inn only survived a few years, for when, in 1832, the present National Gallery was begun, and the ground before it was being cleared to make a great open square, the "Golden Cross" was requested to move along. Thus the existing inn took up its position at a good distance from its old environment. In *Wine and Walnuts*, written by Pyne, he makes Hogarth catch a cold while sketching from the "Golden Cross" window the pageant of the proclamation of George III at Charing Cross.

It was of this great coaching inn that William Maginn uttered the following lament when it was pulled down :

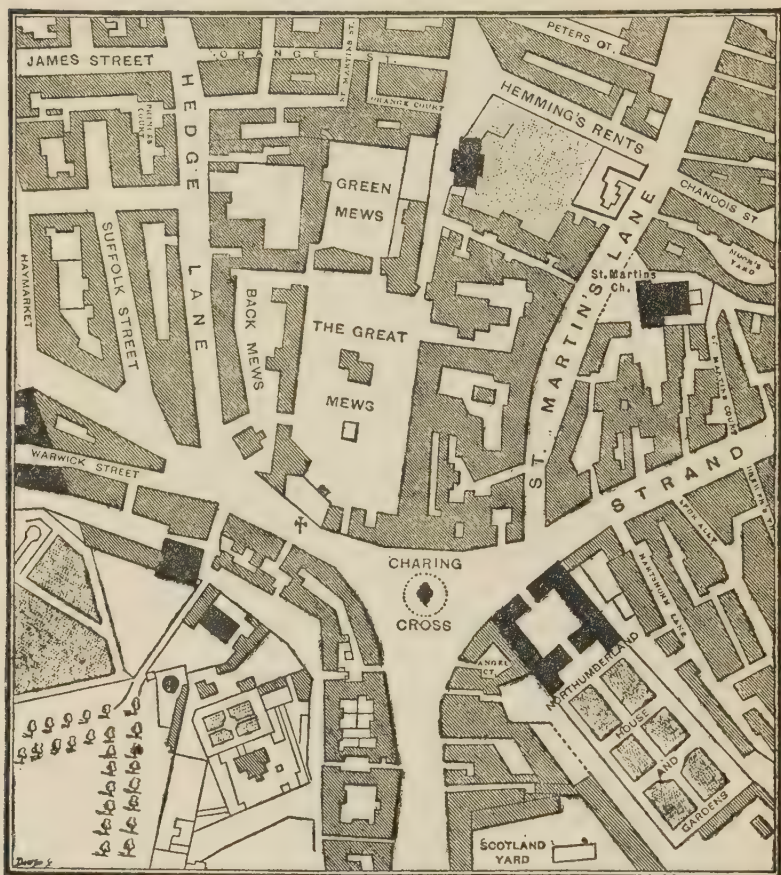
No more the coaches I shall see
Come trundling from the yard,
Nor hear the horn blow cheerily
By brandy-sipping guard.

.

Oh ! London won't be London long,
For 'twill be all pulled down,
And I shall sing a funeral song
O'er that time-honoured town.

From 1690 to 1824 the ground now covered by the National Gallery consisted of the Great Mews. This

is shown in the old plan dated 1690. Even to-day there are several old mews left in Whitcomb Street.



CHARING CROSS IN 1690

(Reproduced by courtesy of the British Museum)

A saddler's shop in Haymarket still obstinately holds out in spite of having lost most of its local custom more than a hundred years ago.

The north-eastern side of the Mews, if we may trust Gray's *Trivia*, was a chosen resort of thieves and gamblers. "Careful observers," he says, "studious of the town" "Pass by the *Meuse*, nor try the thimble's cheats"; and it may be observed that the ill-famed rockery, known in Ben Jonson's day as the "Bermudas Straits," and later, by an allusive euphemism, as the "C'ribbee Islands," was close to St. Martin's Church, where it survived until 1829.

All round the Mews were catacomb passages which connected them with Hedge Lane (now Whitcomb Street) and St. Martin's Lane. It was in a small, convivial inn of this quarter that the brilliant writer, William Maginn, caroused when his habits of intemperance gained the mastery over him. No book on London inns would be complete without a reference to Maginn.

He was born at Cork, in 1793, and educated at Trinity College, Dublin. He taught in Cork for ten years, and in 1823 removed to London to pursue the life of letters. His first contribution to *Blackwood's Magazine*—a Latin translation of *Chevy Chase*—appeared in 1819, and from that date for nine years scarcely a number appeared without an article from his pen. In 1824 Murray started the *Representative*, a daily newspaper, and Maginn was sent to Paris to act as foreign correspondent. In 1828 he joined the staff of the *Standard*, and he was one of the originators of *Fraser's Magazine* in 1830.

He wrote several drinking songs which would scandalize some of his modern brethren, and it is probable that the idea of his song on "The Last Lamp

of the Alley” was suggested during his alcoholic wanderings in the cluster of mean courts between St. Martin’s Lane and the Haymarket.

Maginn’s song runs as follows :—

The last lamp of the alley
Is burning alone !
All its brilliant companions
Are shivered and gone.
No lamp of her kindred,
No burner is nigh,
To rival her glimmer,
Or light to supply.

I’ll not leave thee, thou lone one,
To vanish in smoke !
As the bright ones are shattered,
Thou too shalt be broke.
Thus kindly I scatter
Thy glove o’er the street,
Where the watch in his rambles
Thy fragments shall meet.

Then home will I stagger
As well as I may ;
By the light of my nose sure
I’ll find out the way.
When thy blaze is extinguished,
Thy brilliancy gone,
Oh ! my beak shall illumine
The alley alone.

Maginn must always stand out as a lovable character in the brotherhood of merry fellows, and it is sad to think that like many of his kind, his immoderate ways of life reduced him to great poverty, and finally lodged

him in the Fleet Prison. But even in prison he was always cheerful and amiable. Help came from Sir Robert Peel almost too late, for poor "bright, broken Maginn" died at Walton-on-Thames, August 21st, 1842. He wrote two forgotten romances, *Whitehall, or the Days of George IV* (1827, a parody on the historical novel, and Horace Smith's *Brambletye House* in particular), and *John Manesty* (1844), completed after his death by Charles Ollier.

Wild, brilliant, and cursed with dipsomania—that was Maginn's story; but surely it is something that up to the last he should have been witty, quick of fancy, able to go daily on his riotous way, not with groans or lamentations, but with a heart that was merry in spite of all his misfortunes.

At the corner of Derby and Parliament Streets, Westminster, is the "Red Lion," which is the inn at which young Dickens was the recipient of a kiss from the kindly landlady. The incident which Dickens described so well is to be found in *David Copperfield*. David at ten years old had become "a little labouring hind" in the service of Murdstone and Grinby, and "supported himself" on six or seven shillings a week.

"I was such a child (he writes) and so little, that frequently when I went into the bar of a strange public-house for a glass of ale or porter, to moisten what I had had for dinner, they were afraid to give it to me. I remember one hot evening I went into the bar of a public-house, and said to the landlord:

"'What is your best—your *very best*—ale a glass?' For it was a special occasion. I don't know what It may have been my birthday.

“‘Twopence-halfpenny,’ says the landlord, ‘is the price of the Genuine Stunning Ale.’

“‘Then,’ says I, producing the money, ‘just draw me a glass of the Genuine Stunning, if you please, with a good head to it.’

“The landlord looked at me in return over the bar, from head to foot, with a strange smile on his face ; and instead of drawing the beer looked round the screen and said something to his wife. She came out from behind it with her work in her hand, and joined him in surveying me. Here we stand, all three, before me now. The landlord in his shirt-sleeves, leaning against the bar window-frame ; his wife looking over the little half-door ; and I, in some confusion, looking up at them from outside the partition. . . . They served me with the ale, though I suspect it was not the Genuine Stunning ; and the landlord’s wife, opening the little half-door of the bar and bending down, gave me my money back, and gave me a kiss that was half-admiring and half-compassionate, but all womanly and good, I am sure.”

Twenty years ago if, on leaving Pall Mall, we had turned down Whitcomb Street, we should have come to an old hostelry called the “Nag’s Head.” To-day the site is covered by the fine publishing office of Messrs. Macmillan and Co. The writer recalls the old inn being used as a livery stable shortly before the land was sold to Messrs. Macmillan and Co., the genuine old structure above the stables being used as tenements. The galleries with their rows of fat balusters had been covered with boards, but behind the weather boarding

were low rooms of repose and beams of great age. The "Nag's Head" was then known as Johnston's Stables, and the family is still represented in London, for they are connected with the interesting old business house of Robb in St. Martin's Lane, who sell the most exquisite cakes and buns. How many thousands of babies cut their teeth on Robb's Nursery Rusks sixty years ago?

From a rough sketch I made at the time the old "Nag's Head" is here presented,* and though the structure may not look particularly interesting, the sketch is unique inasmuch as it is the only drawing I have seen of the forgotten hostelry. One or two very old stable-yards still survive in Whitcomb Street which calls to our minds that this was a very horsy neighbourhood when the market for hay was held in the Haymarket. William Hogarth, the celebrated pictorial satirist, who lived in Leicester Square, kept his coach and horses at the "Nag's Head," and this inn was also under Royal patronage from 1714 to 1837, and did all the posting for the Royal Family during that period.

*See p. 198.

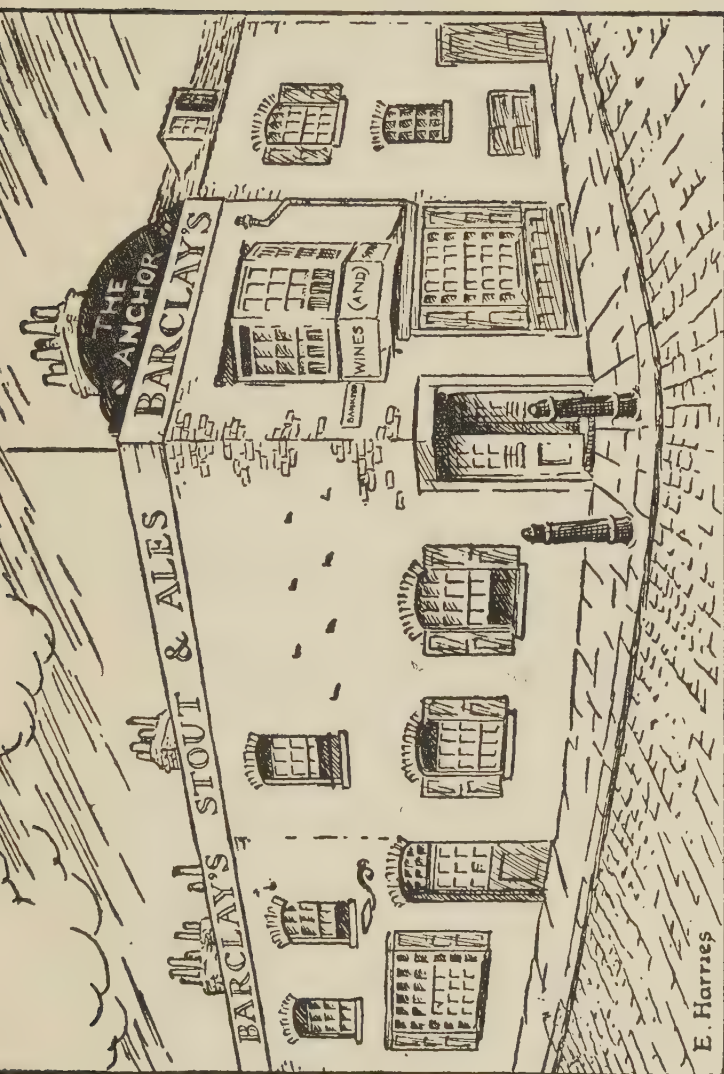
CHAPTER V

SHAKESPEARE AND A BANKSIDE INN

“**H**OW can a man care for the devastating march of civilization,” said I, “when it means the ultimate destruction of such a fine old inn as this? God knows we must pass along; we cannot stop still for ever. The mind must expand and adventure into strange territory, or it will atrophy. But if ever the mind needed repose in which to burgeon, it is in this mad and fretful age of rapacious commerce. And what a place for rest and retrospect is this unfrequented waterside tavern.”

Now that is just the kind of nonsense that a man talks when the sun is shining in its splendour and God is powerfully holding sway in His Heaven. It is a fact that a bright morning brings out the most airy fancies from a man's mind. All the time his unsubstantial dreams go spinning into the bright sparkling atmosphere . . . streaming, curling, floating . . . sun-dreams . . . golden fancies . . . sprightly and superficial.

I could not have found any really existing food for thought in what I said as I sat in the sunshine that morning outside “The Anchor” at Bankend on the Thames because no sooner had I made this momentous utterance than I began to sing—with that imperfect fluting tone which God has blessed me with—all the tag-ends and refrains of songs that I could remember.



THE OLD ANCHOR INN, BANKSIDE

The original Tavern was probably a haunt of the actors of the Globe Theatre

There was neither music, rhyme, nor reason in my repertoire, and the parrot at "The Anchor" told me in the terse and adequate Bankside parlance to "chuck it."

I ended with a short recitation since Polly would not endure my music :

We don't remember, till some sudden breeze,
Blows salt upon our lips,
That London City's open to the seas,
A mother town of ships.

That verse had stuck in my mind all the morning. When you are idle and have nothing on your mind . . . when you have ridden old devil conscience down with spur and whip, a verse such as this stays with you for quite a remarkable length of time. You turn it over in your mind. You invest it with a tune . . . a wailing kind of chanty tune. You possibly improvise, and add frillings :

We don't remember, till some sudden breeze,
(Haul away, boys ; haul away O !)
Blows salt upon our lips,
(Haul away together !)
That London City's open to the seas,
(Haul and away to Califor-ni-o !)
A mother town of ships.

Absurd and meaningless of course, but a song for all that, and the whole scheme of things persuades me that a song only becomes potent and inspiring when it is sung by a man who can throw philosophy to the winds and sing it furiously and magnificently.

"London open to the seas" . . . there is truth in that line. You have only to sit outside "The Anchor"

at Bankend to realize that London is still impregnated with tar, caked with brine, as she has ever been since those dim days when our first Cockney lake-dwellers speared salmon in the tidal estuary where now stands St. James's Park. Always the tide brings with it the sovereign elixir of the sea . . . sixty miles the Thames brings us whole armfuls of vital salt air. One feels keenly conscious of the impression of changelessness, of timelessness conveyed by the persistence of the tide. We Londoners think it a commonplace thing, but in reality it is a daily miracle which through endless repetition has become, to our jaundiced eyes, an unimportant incident.

The best way to visit "The Anchor" is to start from Southwark Cathedral by descending the steps outside the close, and passing by Borough Market, walk along the Clink. It is just as well to examine the cast-iron posts which form buffers to protect the paved ways of Bankside. Some are inscribed "Wardens of St. Saviours, 1827," and others bear the word Clink and the date 1812. Many of them are Elizabethan guns from old warships broken up on the Thames.

We first thread Cathedral Street, passing Montague Close, and arrive at a small wharf called the dock of St. Mary Overie where we get the correct atmosphere of Bankside . . . cranes, ropes, barrels, and bales, with our great primitive river beating and lapping on the moorage posts. A few minutes walk and Bankend is reached. Here stands the ancient "Anchor" Inn. As becomes the simplicity of real age, there is no parade about the entrance to this house. Unadorned by notices about "supreme stout" and "XXXX ale"

designed to raise false hopes, unprofaned by a gaudy signboard, one passes straight from the bank of the lapping river into the sanded parlour. Strait is the gate and narrow the way, but what stories this humble portal could tell if all could have been recorded ! Many men famous for all time have passed over this threshold. This cannot be said of every inn doorway in London ; but then every doorway does not lead to a house of entertainment at whose well-worn tables Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and many Elizabethan play-actors yarned and quaffed their ale. What proof have I that Shakespeare and his friends assembled here ! Not a shred ! But it is better to believe than to know, and trust is more perfect than proof. Therefore I trust that Shakespeare came here. The Globe Playhouse stood at the back, and we have not been told that he did *not* go to the nearest inn for refreshment. That fact is incontrovertible. Well then, let us be reckless ; let us say emphatically and with the glow of faith that Shakespeare often called at “ The Anchor ” . . . that he used it when he took his nightly stroll after the worries and set-backs of his theatrical duties at the Globe Playhouse.

As I have said, “ The Anchor ” stands on the corner at Bankend. The doorway is one of those quaint entrances cut into an angle in the walls, and the windows facing the river project, giving a view of the Thames from London Bridge to Blackfriars.

Through the kindness of Mr. Morton, the landlord, I was permitted to make an inspection of the house from the roof-beams to the cellars. The broad staircase is made of oak entirely, and also the floorboards.

The woodwork is still sound, save that the floors are wavy like the tide of the Thames where the great beams have sagged a little during the last few hundred years. The large room at the top of the stairs is panelled from top to bottom—not with oak, I regret to say. Four doors lead from different corners of the room into dark, cavernous passages and flights of stairs. If any inn was a haunt of smugglers, surely this one was, for everything inside seems to have a flavour of the sea. Even this room is cabin-like with nothing around but wood from floor to the oak rafters, and the moving water of the Thames framed in the windows. A nest of ingenious hiding-places, a relic of the smuggling days, was found when one of the corridors leading to this room was repaired some years ago. The hiding-places were so cleverly constructed that the discovery was only made when a beam was removed. This room, standing as it does so close to the river, and in the early days of smuggling almost isolated, was well adapted to the secrecy so necessary for the successful carrying out of smuggling enterprises. The window commanding a view of the wharfage would have made an excellent look-out for a receiver of contraband.

The site of the Globe Playhouse has been settled as follows :—Barclay's brewery in Park Street now covers the site of the old playhouse, and also of Globe Alley. The present Park Street was Deadman's Place ; New Park Street was Maid Lane. In a deed, Sir Mathew Brand to Memprise, 1626, certain messuages are thus bounded :—

“ By the king's highway, called Deadman's Place

on the east ; by the brook or common sewer dividing the land from the Park of the Lord Bishop of Winchester on the south ; by Lombard Garden on the west ; and by the Alley or way leading to the Gloabe Playhouse, commonly called Gloabe Alley, on the north."

Again, Wadsworth to Ralph Thrale, 1732, messuages are conveyed "fronting a certain Alley or Passage called Globe Alley, in antient times leading from Deadman's Place to the Globe Playhouse."

According to one account the Globe stood near Horseshoe Alley upon the ground which is now occupied by the "Windmill Tavern," on the Bank, within eighty paces of the river, which has since receded from its former limits ; and that it stood on the site of John Whatley's Windmill, as I was assured by an intelligent manager of Barclay's brewhouse, which covers in its ample range part of Globe Alley.

But this allocation has not been accepted with favour by those scholars who have devoted their lives to the elucidation of the Shakespeare Landmarks on Bank-side. There seems little doubt that the site of the Globe was upon the south side of Park Street—the Maid Lane of Shakespeare's days. In Rendle's *History of Old Southwark* will be found some measurements, fixing the relative positions of the Southwark playhouses, taken from points other than those already mentioned.

"Swan, 425 feet from Thames ; 1,625 from St. Mary Overy's Dock.

"Rose, 260-280 feet from Thames ; 1,225 from St. Mary Overy's Dock.

“ Hope (or Near Garden), 375 feet from Thames ; 1,330 from St. Mary Overy’s Dock.

“ Globe, 400-450 feet from Thames ; 900 from St. Mary Overy’s Dock.”

A few minutes’ walk westward along Park Street will bring the pilgrim to a bronze tablet fixed on the wall of the brewery to commemorate the Globe Playhouse. The medallion bust of Shakespeare in the corner is a reproduction of the “ Fist Folio ” portrait by Droeshout.

At the corner of Horseshoe Alley is the “ Windmill Inn ” and steps leading up to Southwark Bridge. Opposite the inn is a row of old houses with lion’s-head-and-ring knockers of an ancient pattern, possibly two hundred years old. I cannot help feeling the fascination of these venerable trifles, and it seems amazing to me that they have lasted out so many years. Many curious brazen-faced door-knockers may be found in this district. There are antique and artistic specimens in Skin Market Place, Moss Alley, and Park Street.

We now pass under Southwark Bridge and come to Rose Alley on the right—a narrow court sloping up to Bankside. The rough paving of large water-worn slabs is extremely picturesque.

The next alley on our right is the Bear Garden where public exhibitions of bear and bull baiting were formerly held. We may regard the “ White Bear Inn ” at the enlargement of the lane as the last survival, or rather imago, of the bear-baiting amphitheatre.

A miller standing by the inn noticed the curiosity with which I was gazing around and inquired if he

could direct me anywhere ; and on my replying that I had come hither solely because I wished to look at the site of the old bear garden, was much interested. He remembered two cottages near the inn being demolished years ago, and the finding of a bear's skull complete with teeth.

If we pass up the Bear Garden the Riverside is reached. Notice the two genuine sixteenth-century guns adapted as corner posts at the entrance of the alley. From this point you gain a spectacle of the Thames where St. Paul's Cathedral heaves its dome out of the City skyline and weighs upon the eyelids of the beholder. . . . It is the crown of London . . . it is unique, it is adorable. The environment of this great amethyst dome is, I will maintain, as beautiful a view as any to be found abroad.

It is almost impossible to imagine London without the dome of St. Paul's, and yet a bygone nursery rhyme reminds us of the time when people used the proverb " As old as Paul's Steeple " :

Upon Paul's steeple stands a tree
As full of apples as may be,
The little boys of London town
They run with hooks to pull them down ;
And then they run from hedge to hedge
Until they come to London Bridge.

This rhyme dates from before 1561, for, in that year, after a severe fire, it was necessary to take the steeple down.

Continuing towards Emerson Street we pass two old houses (50-51, Bankside) which bear the date 1712 over their doors. Long ago this district had a very un-

savoury reputation, and the bawdy-houses here were called "The Stewes." As we may learn from Shakespeare's *Henry VI*, Part I, even bishops were associated with the evil traffic of the Stew Houses. It will be recalled that the Duke of Gloucester reproached Cardinal Beaufort for winking his eye at the free-and-easy ways of the inhabitants here. Even to-day the alleys at the back are not very choice.

Of the characters who frequented "The Stews" we have several notices. The original of the "man about town" was also a *habitué* of the Globe Playhouse.

He is thus sketched in Sir John Davies' *Epigrammes*, under the name of Fuscus :

Fuscus is free, and hath the world at will ;
 Yet in the course of life that he doth lead
 He's like a horse which turning round a mill
 Doth always in the self-same circle tread :
 First, he doth rise at ten ; and at eleven
 He goes to Gill's, where he doth eat till one ;
 Then sees a play till six, and sups at seven ;
 And after supper straight to bed is gone.
 And there till ten next day he doth remain,
 And then he dines : then sees a comedy ;
 And then he sups, and goes to bed again.
 Thus round he runs without variety ;
 Save that sometimes he comes not to the play,
 But falls into a . . . house by the way.

As early as 1580 we have the following description of the use to which theatres were put by young people :—

"In the playhouses at London it is the fashion of youthes to go first into the yarde and to carry their eye through every gallery ; and then, like

unto ravens, where they spy carrion, thither they flye, and presse as nere to the fairest as they can. Instead of pomegranates, they give them pippines ; they dally with their garments to passe the time ; they minister talke upon al occasions, and eyther bring them home to their houses upon small acquaintance, or slip into taverns when the plaies are done.”

Those who remember the sale of oranges and buns in the boxes of Sadler's Wells' theatre about thirty years ago will be interested to learn that apples, nuts, and refreshments were sold in the Globe. For an audience to beguile their time with eating buns and apples in these days would be looked upon as preposterous vulgarity. Even the East End music halls have put away such free and easy manners. But Hentzner, writing in 1598, says : “ In these theatres fruits, such as apples, pears, and nuts, according to the season, are carried about to be sold, as well as ale and wine ” ; and the clamour of the vendors is loudly complained of by a satirical writer of the time of James I. Hentzner thus quaintly describes the habit of smoking : “ At these spectacles and everywhere else the English are constantly smoking tobacco, and in this manner : they have pipes made on purpose made of clay, into the farther end of which they put the herb, so dry that it may be rubbed into powder, and putting fire to it, they draw the smoak into their mouths, which they puff out again through their nostrils, like funnels (and) along with it plenty of phlegm and defluxion from the head.” In *The Gul's Hornebook*, 1609, we read : “ Before the play begins,

fall to cardes"; and in the Induction to *Cynthia's Revels*, by Ben Jonson, 1601: "Now, sir, I am one of your gentle auditors that am come in;—I have my three sorts of tobacco in my pocket; my light by me; and thus I begin." Tobacco, like other refreshments, was sold in the theatre. Ben Jonson, in his *Bartholomew Fair*, 1614, "He looks like a fellow that I have seen accommodate gentlemen with tobacco at the theatres." In 1663, Prynne, in *Histriomastix*, says that women smoked tobacco as well as men.

Before leaving Bankside we must cast an eye on the fine stable-yard, barns, and house at Wakeley's Wharf at No. 74. Notice the lofty Queen Anne doorway, canopy, and side-posts decorated with a carved grapevine design. The barns at the end of the courtyard are ancient. They were once the tackle shops and net sheds of the "long-shore fishermen who caught smelts and salmon in this part of the Thames."

If the pilgrim turns into the opening by 50, Bankside, Cardinal Cup Alley, he will find himself in a nest of catacomb passages which connect Bankside with Park Street. The houses are small and ancient, with red tiles, jutting iron lamps, old-fashioned doors, and small-paned windows. Altogether, it is a piece of Shakespeare's Bankside . . . banished . . . outlawed.

From Cardinal Cup Alley we pass to Skin Market Place, Moss Alley, Lads Court. In walking through these courts we feel the ancientry of the place, but, at the same time, we cannot help feeling a most profound gratitude to Heaven that we do not live in them. Here is nothing but a wilderness of dirt, rags, and hunger. A squalid maze of box-like houses, chiefly inhabited

by a tribe from whom employment has utterly vanished, or to whom it comes but rarely. Every other man here is down and out. Even the police do not worry to look for crooks and burglars here for they know that the inhabitants are too apathetic, too down-cast, for any desperate undertaking. They are but labourers who cannot find labour—dock-labourers and water-side labourers. For every labourer's job on the Bankside there are a thousand applicants. It is a desperate and sorrowful spectacle.

I had a long talk with a Bankside labourer ; a young fellow about thirty with a family of five children. I entered his home in Skin Market Place. His wife was an intelligent, quick woman, who found time to keep the rooms and children tolerably clean and go out to do a bit of washing.

"Are you in work at present?" I asked the labourer.

"Work!" he replied, seeking that evanescent thing, first in my countenance, then on the sooty, bulging ceiling, and then in the features of his cheerful wife: "I wish I was in work! There aint any left for such as us. I tramped a hundred miles last week looking for a job."

"Then how do you manage to live?"

"Live? We don't live. We juggle along."

"But," I insisted, "you must find the money when rent is due; or when the children are . . . are . . . really hungry."

A faint gleam of vain bravery came into the face of the labourer, as he stretched out his arm towards the river. "When we are right up against it I have to

go out at night and 'knock some hing off.' You understand what I mean, pinch something. It absolutely has to be done. I might pick up a small barrel of oil on a wharf, or a case of apples down at the Borough Market, or a sack of flour at the mills. It's not exactly stealing, you know . . . it's keeping alive . . ."

He explained this without a whine or murmur, even with a kind of wayward resoluteness. He was proud of the fact that he came of a family of Banksiders who had lived on the river from time immemorial, and I could not help feeling that perhaps some of the daring and joyous blood of the old riverside smugglers was still alive in him. Shabby as he was, pale with want of nutriment, there was positively a dignity in him, as the family champion riding forth o' nights with flaming sword to . . . "knock off" a box of oranges.

We return to Bankside by Moss Alley, and noted the office of the City of London Electric Lighting Company, which was formerly an inn called "The Waterman's Arms." Making our way back to the "Anchor Inn," we pause to inspect an old-fashioned cottage on our right, No. 2 Bankend, which adjoins Waterworks Yard. During the last century water was pumped from the various water-courses and rivulets in this locality for general consumption. On the corner here is Barclay's Brewery, which occupies the place where once stood the Globe Theatre built about 1596-8.

CHAPTER VI

FROM TRINITY SQUARE TO WAPPING

WISEACRES said of yore, "always get over a stile." It was sound advice. The footpad is the only man who *sees* the country. He gets over stiles, and follows the footpath to find adventure and the unknown. Not so the man who moves swiftly along over four wheels. He must keep to the beaten track, for the most part to the high road. Poor fellow! As there are few stiles in London one cannot give this advice; but there is another maxim which will be found just as advantageous to the town explorer, and that is: "Always walk through courts and alleys." It was through walking to the end of an alley in St. George Street that I met "Pidgeon," the best guide a man could wish for in the East End of London. I can't deny, however, that he was astonishingly vile and villainous in appearance, but what he lacked in outward aspect he made up for with a bright geniality of manner. He was an old sailor who knew every nook and corner of the Docks, and his frank and easy bearing seemed to beget confidence at a glance and to put him on terms of easy familiarity with all comers. His clothing was of a departed age and fashion. He wore brick-red trousers, and the fabric of them was as obstinate as leather, and had on a thick blue jersey, an ancient bowler hat, and a blue

bird's-eye handkerchief. On matters relating to the East End of London I found him a very reliable guide, but upon matters concerning his life and adventures in foreign lands I judged him to be a great liar.

Since, however, the reader may not be fortunate enough to find a guide like "Pidgeon," I will briefly indicate the best way to reach the old Ratcliff Highway, now called St. George Street. Let us start from Mark Lane Station, and pass along to Trinity Square. Here we might pause to look at "The Woolpack" on the corner of the Minories. Behind this inn are two of the most curious nooks in this part of the City, one called Circus and the other Crescent. The former consists of an arc of very fine Georgian houses, delightful souvenirs and fine examples of the town homes of the period. The nail-studded shutters, solid doors, curious door-knockers, and lion's-head keystones preserve an outward expression of charm and character throughout this forgotten *cul-de-sac*.

Bolin's Hotel in Circus has quite a Dickensian look about it, and one could quite imagine it serving for a model for the "hybrid hotel in a little square behind Aldersgate Street" in which the author lodges Jasper in the last chapter of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. The inn of the novel is described as being: "Hotel, boarding-house, or lodging house, at its visitor's option. It announces itself, in the new Railway Advertisers, as a novel enterprise, timidly beginning to spring up. It bashfully, almost apologetically, gives the traveller to understand that it does not expect him, on the good old constitutional hotel plan, to order a pint of sweet blacking for his drinking, and

throw it away ; but insinuates that he may have his boots blacked instead of his stomach, and maybe also have bed, breakfast, attendance, and a porter up all night, for a certain fixed charge."

From the Minories we walk towards St. Katharine's Dock House (note the lamp post from which juts a Roman galley) and pass down Upper East Smithfield, through East Smithfield to St. George Street. Here, it must be admitted, we are in one of London's roughest and toughest quarters. The long narrow street, with its nests of close and narrow alleys and courts inhabited by the lowest class of Jews and aliens, with a good sprinkling of London crooks and long-shore roughs, has passed into a byword as the synonym of squalor and debauchery. Ratcliff Highway is every bit as rough to-day as it was thirty years ago. The mere fact that the name has been changed to St. George Street has done nothing to purge this rank, poisonous undergrowth in a forest of misery. But when you say to some Londoner that St. George Street is a "rough house" he will remark merrily, "Oh, it was rough in the old days, but to-day it is a reformed region," as though leopards lost their spots by calling them sheep. Anyhow, the hovels still stand, and the place has changed very little since the days when Gustave Doré and Blanchard Jerrold thus described it in their unwieldy volume on London :

"Every living creature slouches or shambles ; the women are brawny of arm and of brazen countenance ; the public houses are driving a wonderful trade ; and along all the line the money gained by night-watches in the northern seas, and over crestless

black billows of the Baltic, is being freely and badly spent.

“Take Shadwell, Ratcliff Highway, Old Gravel Lane, and Rotherhithe, and you find few differences—save at points, in the intensity of the squalid recklessness. By day and by night it is the same interminable scene of heedless, shiftless, money-squandering of Jack ashore, in the company of his sweetheart.

“The whole is a grand picture—with a very dark background—such a background as that which appeared to us one dark night, outside a public-house, by Dockhead.

“An after-dark journey by the riverside is an expedition to be undertaken cautiously, and in safe company. In the Ratcliff district there is a strong dislike to the appearance of people who belong to the West of London. Muttered oaths and coarse jests follow in the wake of the stranger—seasoned in proportion to the richness of his appearance. A fop of St. James’s Street would fare badly if he should attempt a solitary pilgrimage to Shadwell. His air of wealth would be regarded as aggressive and impertinent in these regions, upon which the mark of poverty is set in lively colours. It is remarkable that the poverty of the riverside is unlike that of Drury Lane or Bethnal Green. The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune pierce a rollicking company by the water. Jack gives a constant jollity to the scene—and is the occasion of the interminable roystering apparent in the lines of low public-houses thronged with ragged, loud-

voiced men and women. The pitched battle we witnessed outside a public-house at Dockhead one threatening night is an incident that from time to time starts out of the level of the Ratcliff Highwayman's careless and vicious life of want and drink."

I followed Pidgeon through parts of Ratcliffe which would have been barred to me without a real Bank-sider ; underground depths, like the abysses after death ; upper stories and roofs of buildings that reached up from the courts as if striving for space to breathe ; narrow, crooked alleys, where girls lounged from the lower windows and cast vampire glances at the sailors passing to and fro. We bent at doorways that barred our path at sudden turns, peered into vile dens that lined the way, and, choking and strangling, climbed above ground, where we scanned girls at work making baskets to earn ten shillings a week. . . . We visited gambling-dens, but could not pass the cat-like Chinese watchman, with wrinkled face like a baked apple, before he pressed an electric bell near him to warn his friends of the approach of a stranger. . . . Doors were slammed, and the shuffling of feet sounded above us as we climbed the rickety stairs. In this way, through the bell alarm, the rooms of the building shifted and duped as we passed along the passages. At last we found the gaming room and a group of men and girls talking . . . merely talking ; but neither dice, Fan-Tan card, button, nor brass rings. Pidgeon, who was a frequenter at the den, was accepted, but dozens of eyes were fixed on me in a moment. I did not belong to the fraternity. I was outside the pale. I spoke to a girl—a little leech with crimsoned lips and

eyes full of unholy beauty. The expensive silk stockings and well-cut costume she wore told me that money came her way more easily than it did to the seamstress and basket-maker. I almost expected the level affected voice of a modern fancy girl, but instead she spoke in the staccato of the alley-born slut. . . .

“ Give us a dollar for a box of chocolates . . . oh, carm on, cocky, be a sport. Lor lummy, if yer can’t spring a dollar, give us the price of a drink. . . . ”

An Order in Council of 1916 prohibited the smoking of opium, and I believe that very little opium is now used in the hovels around the Docks. However, Ratcliff Highway was looked upon as the centre of the opium traffic about fifty years ago, and its opium dens have supplied local colour for many well-known novels. Dickens has a striking picture of it all in *Edwin Drood*. I picked up a queer book called *Free Lance Tiltings in Many Lists*, which described the opium dens of Shadwell in 1881, and I was interested to find that the original of the opium haunt in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* was known as “ Johnston’s garret in the Ratcliff Highway.” I felt that I must know more about this Dickens landmark, and I set myself to hunt through various records, and found to my delight a fine drawing of the room by Doré in his *London Pilgrimage*. Describing the interior as it appeared in 1871, Blanchard Jerrold writes :

“ Upon the wreck of a four-post bedstead (the posts of which almost met overhead, and from which depended bundles of shapeless rags), upon a mattress heaped with indescribable clothes, lay, sprawling, a Lascar, dead-drunk with opium ; and

at the foot of the bed a woman, with a little brass lamp among the rags covering her, stirring the opium over the tiny flame. She only turned her head dreamily as we entered. She shivered under the gust of night air we had brought in, and went on warming the black mixture. It was difficult to see any humanity in that face, as the enormous, grey, dry lips lapped about the rough wood pipe and drew in the poison. The man looked dead. She said he had been out since four in the morning trying to get a job in the docks—and had failed.

“We escaped from the opium fumes, in which a score of white mice (the woman’s pets) were gambolling over the rags and dirt she called her bed; back through the tangle of courts, in one of which we were told there was not an unconvicted lodger; under the fire of invective and sarcasm from women who threw up the windows and gesticulated at us like fiends—to a certain thieves’ public-house, the landlord of which is one of the most considerable receivers of stolen goods in the country.”

Charles J. Dunphie and Albert King, in their *Free Lance Tiltings in Many Lands* (Tinsley Brothers, 1881), give a vivid picture of the East End opium dens. Here is their impression of Ratcliff Highway :

“Overhead it was as wet as the sea, underfoot it was not much drier. Nothing could be more disconsolate than the expression of the dark, soaking streets, unless, indeed, it were the dreary aspect of the shops, stored with dingy merchandise, and lighted in a fashion that only served to make dark-



GAMBLING AT A LOW LODGING-HOUSE ON THE RATCLIFF
HIGHWAY, 1850

ness visible. The things exposed for sale were miscellaneous, but adapted, for the most part, to the requirements of seafaring men. Sou'wester hats, glossy tarpaulins, suits of yellow oil-cloth, huge sea-boots, and a multitude of matters connected with ships, were everywhere apparent. With these were commingled in strange combination old regimentals, military accoutrements, articles of female apparel, watches, jewellery, pictures, china, bronzes, and the ordinary heterogeneous wares of dealers in old curiosities. The advertisements in the windows were *bizarre* in their whimsical juxta-position. Amid a mass of arid and discordant objects bloomed, in happy promise, like a vine on a barren heath, the fruitful word, 'MIDWIFERY.' A tripe-seller, of all people in the world, proclaimed in a placard that by him were 'CORN CURED WITHOUT CUTTING.' A publican exhibited in his window this well-nigh incredible announcement, 'HALF A BED FOR EIGHT-PENCE.' Here was a London I had never dreamt of—one of a hundred Londons that the other ninety-nine wot not of. A band of roaring drunkards staggered vociferously out of a ginshop—no radiant gin-palace, effulgent with lamps and many-coloured decorations like those in the West End, but a dark, blackguard little den, which to enter seemed as much as your life were worth. Some of these fellows were 'mellow,' and looked good-natured enough in their lunacy; others were ingrained ruffians, whose ruffianism the demon gin had brought murderously to the surface. They glared at us as though they could have slain us. Between

them and us flowed the river, in darkling tide. 'Good night,' said I to him who seemed the vilest of the lot, hoping to turn his scowl into a smile. 'You be d—d!' said the ruffian."

The authors of *Free Lance Tiltings* have also left an interesting description of a Limehouse opium den.

"In the grate was a blazing fire, whose flickering flames glanced fitfully on the furniture and stock-in-trade. On the left-hand side of the mantelpiece had been erected the 'Joss,' or altar dedicated to Buddha. This tiny shrine was fancifully draped in crimson silk, and decked out with painted cups and gaudy trinkets of one sort or another. In front burned half-a-dozen sacred lights—brown tapers no thicker than pens. Tawdry though its decorations were, this miniature temple gave to the humble household of religious sentiment a certain tone and was not without a picturesque effect.

"The master of the house was a tall, gaunt Chinaman. The air reeked with the fumes of opium, as well, indeed it might, for, stretched at full length upon an easy couch behind the counter, lay a young Chinaman smoking the juice of the white poppy. Not budging an inch from his luxurious posture, nor taking the pipes from his lips, nor even stirring a finger, when we entered, he yet managed to give us a dreamy welcome, smiling at us rapturously with his eyes through his tabernacle of white clouds. He was in Paradise. Never have I seen any human being look so seraphically happy. 'Blessed Nepenthe!' thought I to myself, 'if, in this sorrow-laden world, thou canst indeed thus beguile thy

votaries into ecstatic felicity and bliss ineffable, why should we dare to vilify and condemn thee? Should we not rather offer thee the incense of loving gratitude, and hold thy dear name in everlasting benediction?’ During the half-hour or so that we remained in conversation with the other occupants of the house, this ‘Heathen Chinee’ continued in the same recumbent position, and never desisted from his delightful enjoyment. At last he rose, laid aside his pipe of opium, lighted one of tobacco, and, with this in his mouth, bowed courteously to all present, and, without uttering a word, went away, the picture of placid happiness.

“Our hospitable landlord now led us to a room up-stairs, not less clean and orderly than that below. Here we found a number of opium-smokers, without exception Chinamen. They received us with Oriental politeness, and told us to make ourselves at home with them. What particularly attracted our attention was, that they were one and all, not only comfortably, but even tastefully clad. That is to say, there was a certain spruceness about the style of their clothes; their linen was as white as snow; and they all had watches and albert chains. Some of them wore rings. They were all sailors—so the master of the house informed us. It was impossible not to feel how astonishing was the contrast between these polite and well-dressed men—votaries of a practice which, in this country, is regarded as little worse than a crime, and the ragged, roaring drunkards, the brutal ruffianly bacchanalians, by whom we had been cursed and jostled, bullied and black-

guarded. The process of smoking opium is thus described :

“Lying upon his side, with his head upon a pillow, the smoker reclines shoeless on an elevated couch or bed covered with matting, or such other bed-clothes as he may prefer. His pipe is a rod of bamboo or sugar-cane, from twenty to twenty-four inches long. At about one-fourth of its length from the end is what looks like the bowl, but is, in reality, an enamelled clay-block, shaped like a peg-top with the upper round cut off, forming a flat, circular slab, about two inches in diameter. In the middle of this slab is drilled a small hole, about as big as the orifice for a stout hair-pin. The smoker takes the pipe in one hand, and in the other a steel pin about seven or eight inches long. The end of this piece of wire he dips into the opium, which is a thick fluid, of a dark-brown colour, strongly resembling treacle. Held then over the flame of a small lamp, the opium gradually frizzles and hardens. When it is tolerably firm in substance, it is turned about on the slab of the pipe until it becomes cone-shaped, to bring it to which form really requires no little skill and practice. Sticking the apex of the cone into the hole drilled in the slab, the smoker drives the pin home through it to secure a passage for air ; then, turning the pipe so as to bring the flame of the lamp to bear upon the little mass of hardened opium, he takes long inspirations, throws off dense fumes of smoke, and—is in Elysium.”

Here is a little sketch which supplies an amusing

pendant to the above passages from *Free Lance Tilt-ings* :

“ Here the only smoker was a man of colour, a native of Madras, whose rapturous eulogy of opium was restricted somewhat ludicrously by his inability to give adequate expression to his enthusiasm in the English language. He was a sailor, a very honest fellow, and a very good-looking fellow to boot, his colour notwithstanding ; but anything more laughable than the way his words got glued together in a lump within his mouth it is impossible to imagine. He wanted to make us understand how cheap and plentiful is opium in his own country, and what a delightful effect it has upon his countrymen ; but he lost all patience at his own hopeless attempt to master the Anglo-Saxon tongue, and upon my word, I thought he would have gone off in a fit. He managed, however, to draw a comparison, more potent than fluent, between the relative effects of gin and opium. ‘ Opium,’ he said, ‘ make man love self and all world ; opium no make murder ; gin set brain fire ; gin make man kill wife and kick little children.’ ”

The inns of St. George Street, it will be guessed, are not inviting. The bars are flat and give the impression of mildew, damp, and dirt, and always the whiff of last night’s beer stabs through the viscid atmosphere. Three of the most tolerable inns in the “ highway ” are “ The Artichoke,” “ The Horseshoe,” and the “ Lord Lovat ” at the corner of Dellow Street.

A few steps down Old Gravel Lane brings us to one of the London Dock bridges. Readers of Dickens

will remember that when the author was writing *The Uncommercial Traveller* he visited this spot, then called Mr. Baker's trap. His impressions are thus detailed in the above-mentioned volume :

"I found myself on a swing-bridge looking down at some dark locks in some dirty water. Over against me, stood a creature remotely in the likeness of a young man, with a puffed sallow face, and a figure all dirty and shiny and slimy, who may have been the youngest son of his filthy old father, Thames, or the drowned man about whom there was a placard on the granite post like a large thimble, that stood between us.

"I asked this apparition what it called the place? Unto which, it replied, with a ghastly grin and a sound like gurgling water in its throat :

" 'Mr. Baker's trap.'

"Inspiration suggested to me that Mr. Baker was the acting coroner of that neighbourhood.

" 'A common place for suicide,' said I, looking down at the locks.

" 'Sue?' returned the ghost, with a stare. 'Yes! And Poll. Likewise Emily. And Nancy. And Jane'; he sucked the iron between each name; 'and all the bileing. Ketches off their bonnets or shorls, takes a run, and headers down here, they doos. Always a headerin' down here, they is. Like one o'clock.'

" 'And at about that hour of the morning, I suppose?'

" 'Ah!' said the apparition. "*They* an't partickler. Two 'ull do for *them*. Three. All times o'

night. On'y mind you ! ' Here the apparition rested his profile on the bar, and gurgled in a sarcastic manner. ' There must be somebody comin'. They don't go a headerin' down here, wen there an't no Bobby nor Gen'ral Cove, fur to hear the splash.'

According to my interpretation of these words, I was myself a General Cove, or member of the miscellaneous public. In which modest character I remarked :

" ' They are often taken out, are they, and restored ? ' "

" ' I dunno about restored,' said the apparition, who, for some occult reason, very much objected to that word ; ' they're carried into the werkiss and put into a 'ot bath, and brought round. But I dunno about restored,' said the apparition ; ' blow *that* ! '—and vanished."

At the end of Old Gravel Lane you pass " The Dock House " tavern and enter High Street, Wapping, that nautical hamlet of Stepney, a long-raised road carried over the marshiness of the river bank from Lower East Smithfield to Shadwell Basin. The embankment here is no new thing. It was begun in 1571, to secure the manor from the encroachments of the river, which had flooded the land at this spot ; the Thames Commissioners rightly imagining that when building once began the tenants would resist the inflowing tides for the sake of their own lives and properties. Stow calls it Wapping-in-the-Wash ; and Strype describes it as a place chiefly inhabited by seafaring men and tradesmen dealing in commodities for the supply of shipping and shipmen.

The "Town of Ramsgate" inn, standing at the head of Wapping Old Stairs, is a notable specimen of a waterman's tavern. At the side a passage with a rough paving of flagstones leads to the famous stairs. The old stairway will charm you in every way, for it is ancient, satisfying to the eye, and full of the rough simplicity of things which belong to ships and the sea. The steps are worn and polished by the tides, and show markings and glairs in the wet stonework running into every shade of agate and slate blue. But the timeless masonry of the stairs is not more permanent than their place in song and story. The mention of Wapping Old Stairs instantly connects the mind with "Molly who has never been false, she declares":

Your Molly has never been false, she declares,
Since last time we parted at Wapping Old Stairs,
When I swore that I still would continue the same,
And gave you the 'bacco box mark'd with your name.
When I pass'd a whole fortnight between decks with you,
Did I e'er give a kiss, Tom, to one of the crew?
To be useful and kind, with my Thomas I stay'd,
For his trousers I wash'd, and his grog, too, I made.

Though you threaten'd last Sunday to walk in the Mall
With Susan from Deptford, and likewise with Sal,
In silence I stood your unkindness to hear,
And only upbraided my Tom with a tear;
Why should Sal, or should Susan, than me be more priz'd?
For the heart that is true, Tom, should ne'er be despised;
Then be constant and kind, nor your Molly forsake,
Still your trousers I'll wash, and your grog, too, I'll make.

It is probable that the "Town of Ramsgate" was called the "Red Cow" at an earlier period, and was the scene of the capture of the cruel minister of James II,

Lord Chancellor Jeffreys, who, trying to make his escape in the disguise of a common seaman, was recognized by a moneylender, whom he had once bullied when in his clutches. Macaulay has related the story of the capture with much vividness :

“ The ‘ trimmer ’ was walking through Wapping when he saw a well-known face looking out of the window of an ale-house. He could not be deceived. The eyebrows, indeed, had been shaved away. The dress was that of a common sailor from Newcastle, and was black with coal-dust ; but there was no mistaking the savage eye and mouth of Jeffreys. The alarm was given. In a moment the house was surrounded by hundreds of people, shaking bludgeons and bellowing curses. The fugitive’s life was saved by a company of the Trainbands ; and he was carried before the Lord Mayor. The mayor was a simple man, who had passed his whole life in obscurity, and was bewildered by finding himself an important actor in a mighty revolution. The events of the last twenty-four hours, and the perilous state of the city which was under his charge, had disordered his mind and his body. When the great man, at whose frown, a few days before, the whole kingdom had trembled, was dragged into the justice-room begrimed with ashes, half dead with fright, and followed by a raging multitude, the agitation of the unfortunate mayor rose to the height. He fell into fits, and was carried to his bed, whence he never rose. Meanwhile, the throng without was constantly becoming more numerous and more savage. Jeffreys begged

to be sent to prison. An order to that effect was procured from the Lords who were sitting at Whitehall ; and he was conveyed in a carriage to the Tower. Two regiments of militia were drawn out to escort him, and found the duty a difficult one. It was repeatedly necessary for them to form, as if for the purpose of repelling a charge of cavalry, and to present a forest of pikes to the mob. The thousands who were disappointed of their revenge pursued the coach with howls of rage to the gate of the Tower, brandishing cudgels, and holding up halters full in the prisoner's view. The wretched man, meantime, was in convulsions of terror. He wrung his hands, he looked wildly out, sometimes at one window, sometimes at the other, and was heard, even above the tumult, crying, ' Keep them off, gentlemen ! For God's sake, keep them off ! ' At length, having suffered far more than the bitterness of death, he was safely lodged in the fortress, where some of his most illustrious victims had passed their last days, and where his own life was destined to close in unspeakable ignominy and terror."

Just below the stairs was the place of execution for pirates. The natives of Wapping will point out a modern mooring post as the very timber to which the pirates were lashed and left to drown in the rising tide. Stow says of it :

" The usual place for hanging of pirates and sea-rovers, at the low-water mark, and there to remain till three tides had overflowed them ; was never a house standing within these forty years, but since

the gallows being after removed farther off, a continual street, or filthy strait passage, with alleys of small tenements or cottages built, inhabited by sailors' victuallers, along by the river of Thames, almost to Radcliffe, a good mile from the Tower."

Pirates were hung at East Wapping as early as the reign of Henry VI, for in a *Chronicle of London*, edited by Sir Harris Nicolas, we read that in this reign two bargemen were hung beyond St. Katharine's, for murdering three Flemings and a child in a Flemish vessel; "and there they hengen till the water had washed them by ebbing and flowyd, so the water bett upon them."

In one of the wild, romantic plays of the Elizabethan days, a sailor chanted aloud, in a large free way, this rhapsody on the pirates' dock at Wapping :

How many captains that have aw'd the seas
Shall fall on this unfortunate piece of land !
Some that commanded islands ; some to whom
The Indian mines paid tribute, the Turk vailed.

But now our sun is setting ; night comes on ;
The watery wilderness o'er which we reigned
Proves in our ruins peaceful. Merchants trade,
Fearless abroad as in the river's mouth,
And free as in a harbour. Then, fair Thomas,
Queen of fresh water, famous through the world,
And not the least through us, whose double tides
Must overflow our bodies; and, being dead,
May thy clear waves our scandals wash away,
But keep our valours living.

Within a few yards of the " Town of Ramsgate " is Pierhead, the Wapping entrance to London Docks.

Here on a stone-dressed landing-stage stands a row of ample and solid-looking Georgian houses which have been occupied for some years by religious and other societies devoted to the welfare of the poor in the Docks. The lock at Pierhead is a queer little place where all men and things would seem to be asleep. There is an idle causelessness of slumber about the old Pierhead on a summer afternoon, and in the midst of the drab surroundings of the docks you will find an unexpected oasis of greenery. They have made the Pierhead into a garden by training ornamental vines over the grey stones and old capstans. Virginia-creeper hangs in festoons from the huts and buildings and flowers grow, it would seem, more by favour because they liked the quaint old corner than from any care or cultivation.

As I stepped across the pier to have a few words with the lock-keeper, his cat opened her eyes and blinked at the sun. Then she yawned, and displayed a scarlet mouth and tongue. The geraniums on the window-sill were only a shade more vivid than pussy-cat's jaws.

"Much work here?" I asked the lock-keeper presently, which is the proper and conventional thing to inquire of a man when he is lounging about with pipe in mouth and hands in pockets.

I gathered from him that about two steamers a week came through the lock, and that it was a ticklish job to warp them into the docks as the water was shallow and the sluice-way narrow. All the gear is worked by hand, except the bridge which has just been fitted with electric elevating contrivances.

Near Wapping Pierhead is the Church of St. John and the old schoolhouse, founded 1695. Note the finely-executed stone figures over the doorway—representing a boy and girl in the costume of eighteenth-century school-children.

We retrace our steps towards Wapping Station. At No. 93 High Street is a fine Queen Anne mansion with an imposing doorway and charming lunette. Opposite is the station of the River Police. At the Shadwell end of Wapping High Street stands the “Prospect of Whitby,” another picturesque waterside inn.

Shadwell, like Wapping, was a hamlet of Stepney, till 1669, when it was separated by Act of Parliament. It derives its name, it is supposed, by Lysons from a spring dedicated to St. Chad. Its extent is very small, being only 910 yards long, and 760 broad. In Lysons’ time the only land in the parish not built on was the Sun Tavern Fields, in which were rope-walks, where cables were made, from six to twenty-three inches in girth; the rest of the parish was occupied by ships’ chandlers, biscuit bakers, ship-builders, mast-makers, sail-makers, and anchor-smiths. Only the tenacious ship-builders have outlived the centuries, and the survivors are mostly interested in the repair of barges.

Adjoining the “Prospect of Whitby” is a barge-builder’s yard, which gives one a mingled pleasure of reminiscence and discovery. Who is there amongst us who in his boyhood has not spent many happy hours rummaging about some friendly shipwrights’ sheds? And here at this Shadwell wharfage was a spot which brought me back to those days when I was a child. For in the old sheds overhanging the river the

boats turned upside down, the barges moored criss-cross and slantways, the tar-boiling cauldrons, the spars, pulley-blocks and rope tackle, I could see all the possibilities of a thousand games, inventions, and adventures . . . I could see how easily might the mouldering hulk become the pirate brigantine with frowning guns and a jolly roger flag. Such a spot would have been a magnet through the long summer holidays, and its enchantment would have set itself to the broken staves of romance during many a long and dreary day in the class-room.

As I sat on the little jutting balcony of the "Prospect of Whitby" with a tall jug of ale and a contemplative pipe, I thought of all the splendid things which could be accomplished with just two indispensable conditions—the return of childhood and faith. For childhood and faith can make history more swiftly than can kings. When we become men we lose the trick of stirring up history with a tuppenny pistol, and must moil and toil, and build a hideous red-brick villa before we can return through grey hairs and the foolishness of dreams to the lost gardens of childhood.

Heigh-ho !

Next door to the "Prospect of Whitby" is a house over which hangs the air of a prosperous past time. It is a Queen Anne building with a quaint doorway, striking, many-paned corner windows and an approach paved with water-worn cobbles. I believe it is the residence of the barge-builder.

"Among the thirty-six taverns and public-houses in Wapping High Street and Wapping Wall," says Mr. Timbs, "are the signs of the Ship and Pilot, Ship and

Star, Ship and Punchbowl, Union Flag and Punchbowl, the Gun, North American Sailor, Golden Anchor, Anchor and Hope, the Ship, Town of Ramsgate, Queen's Landing, Ship and Whale, the Three Mariners, and the Prospect of Whitby."

CHAPTER VII

THE "BOAR'S HEAD" TAVERN

THE other day I received a curious impression of being carried away from the cold, mechanic happenings of the present times into the oak-beamed rooms and narrow, unlighted streets of Shakespeare's London. It was all on account of a gravestone. In a favourite old book, now seldom mentioned, *The Sketch Book*, by Washington Irving, I found the author talking of the "Boar's Head" Tavern in Eastcheap. Irving says :

"I casually opened upon the comic scenes of Henry IV and was, in a moment, completely lost in the mad-cap revelry of the 'Boar's Head' Tavern. So vividly and naturally are these scenes of humour depicted, and with such force and consistency are the characters sustained, that they become mingled up in the mind with the facts and personages of real life. To few readers does it occur that these are all ideal creations of a poet's brain, and that, in sober truth, no such knot of merry roysterers ever enlivened the dull neighbourhood of Eastcheap.

"For my part, I love to give myself up to the illusions of poetry. A hero of fiction that never existed is just as valuable to me as a hero of history that existed a thousand years since ; and, if I may be excused such an insensibility to the common ties

of human nature, I would not give up fat Jack for half the great men of ancient chronicle. What have the heroes of yore done for me, or men like me? They have conquered countries of which I do not enjoy an acre; or they have gained laurels of which I do not inherit a leaf; or they have furnished examples of hare-brained prowess, which I have neither the opportunity nor the inclination to follow. Bu., old Jack Falstaff!—kind Jack Falstaff!—sweet Jack Falstaff!—has enlarged the boundaries of human enjoyment; he has added vast regions of wit and good humour, in which the poorest man may revel; and has bequeathed a never-failing inheritance of jolly laughter, to make mankind merrier and better to the latest posterity.”

Irving at once makes up his mind to take a pilgrimage to Eastcheap, to ascertain if the old “Boar’s Head” tavern still exists. No sooner had he formed the resolution than he puts it into execution and finds his way to merry Eastcheap, the ancient home of wit and wassail. On his arrival there Irving bemoans “how sadly is the scene changed since the roaring days of Falstaff and old Stowe! The madcap roister has given place to the plodding tradesman; the clattering of pots and the sound of “harpe and sawtrie,” to the din of carts and the accursed dinging of the dustman’s bell; and no song is heard, save, haply, the strain of some siren from Billingsgate, chanting the eulogy of deceased mackerel.”

Now the date of Irving’s pilgrimage must have been some year before 1831. He was living in London during 1819 and 1820, while he was writing the pieces

for his miscellany called *The Sketch Book*, and it is probable that he visited Eastcheap during this period. We know that the date was prior to 1831 because St. Michael's Church was demolished in that year. Irving speaks of the church as still standing in Crooked Lane in his description of Eastcheap and its vicinity. At 51 King William Street, on the front of a Lyons's tea shop, a tablet announces that: "In the roadway opposite stood St. Michael's Church," and taking this as a guide we may fix the exact situation of the "Boar's Head" as the ground now covered by the statue of King William IV. When Washington Irving explored the old church he mentioned a small cemetery, immediately under the back window of what was once this tavern, and pointed out that the two buildings were contiguous. Irving had the curiosity to examine the gravestones in the cemetery and discovered a quaint epitaph to Robert Preston, formerly a tapster at the "Boar's Head." Thus in his *Sketch Book* he has this strange anecdote which relates to Preston's tombstone:

"It is now nearly a century since this trusty drawer of good liquor closed his bustling career, and was thus quietly deposited within call of his customers. As I was clearing away the weeds from his epitaph, the little sexton drew me on one side with a mysterious air, and informed me in a low voice, that once upon a time, on a dark wintry night, when the wind was unruly, howling, and whistling, banging about doors and windows, and twirling weathercocks, so that the living were frightened out of their beds, and even the dead

could not sleep quietly in their graves, the ghost of honest Preston, which happened to be airing itself in the churchyard, was attracted by the well-known call of 'waiter' from the 'Boar's Head,' and made its sudden appearance in the midst of a roaring club, just as the parish clerk was singing a stave from the 'mirrie garland of Captain Death'; to the discomfiture of sundry train-band captains, and the conversion of an infidel attorney, who became a zealous Christian on the spot, and was never known to twist the truth afterwards, except in the way of business."

Bob Preston died in 1730, aged twenty-seven years, and the inscription which Irving copied from his grave slab is as follows :—

Bacchus, to give the toping world surprise,
Produced one sober son, and here he lies.
Though rear'd among full hogsheads, he defy'd
The charms of wine, and every one beside.
O reader, if to justice thou'rt inclined,
Keep honest Preston daily in thy mind.
He drew good wine, took care to fill his pots,
Had sundry virtues that excused his faults.
You that on Bacchus have the like dependance,
Pray copy Bob in measure and attendance.

When I read this account of Preston a curious desire possessed me to see whether this grave slab did in fact still exist. On the whole it seemed rather a hopeless proceeding to inquire after the existence of a sepulchral stone on the strength of its casual mention in a book written over a hundred years ago . . . a frivolous inquiry with which to interrupt, even for a few

minutes, the money-making machinery of Eastcheap's great mercantile houses. For a time I wandered about Eastcheap with my ridiculous questions about the "Boar's Head," the old church, and its gravestones, receiving nothing but courtesy and misleading information; but never a soul did I meet who could tell me what became of the relics of old St. Michael's Church when it was desecrated in 1831. It seemed to me that the adjacent church of St. Margaret Pattens might be an avenue of approach and I turned my steps towards Rood Lane. I must say that this stage of my search repaid me a hundredfold for any trouble I had so far taken over my absurd quest. I did not find my grave slab but I found a quaint old-fashioned church with two unique, canopied pews. A very courteous vergers showed me round, specially pointing out the organ, two hundred and forty years old; a James II coat-of-arms carved in oak and a memorial to Charles I, the only instance of such a record in a London church.

In the canopy of one of the pews you may read C.W. 1686. This was the private seat of Sir Christopher Wren. The Sussex iron sword rest, dated 1723, is worth attention. It is placed here to accommodate the city sword when a state visit to the church is made by the Lord Mayor. It was the gift of a former Governor of the Bank of England, who was also an officer at Fishmongers' Hall. The arms of the Fishmongers' Company displaying curved fish and the keys of St. Peter, are painted on the sword rest. There is an hour-glass dated 1750, which runs for an hour exactly, and the banner of the Worshipful Company of Pattenmakers which still holds an annual service here.

A patten was a wooden sole on an iron ring for raising the wearer's shoes out of the mud. Pattens are represented on the banner with the curious cutting instruments used in making them. The suffix of "Pattens" in the dedication of the church may be due to a benefactor, or, as Stow suggests, because "of old time." Pattens were sold in what is now Rood Lane (so called from a Crucifix, or Rood, set up in the churchyard), but then known, as St. Margaret Patten Lane, or again, as some think, from the beautiful vaulted roofing of the church, which was inlaid with "Patines." (See *Merchant of Venice*, Act. V, Scene 1): "Look how the floor of Heaven is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold."

Just before departing, however, from St. Margaret Pattens to make a further search for the "Boar's Head" relic, I fortunately addressed a precautionary inquiry to the verger, asking him if he had ever heard of honest Preston's tombstone. He went over to a chest and fell to looking over some papers. Presently he raised his head.

"There's some 'Boar's Head' relics at St. Magnus under London Bridge," he informed me. "Or there used to be . . . a tobacco-box and a drinking-cup, which had once been used at the 'Boar's Head' tavern."

Now when he said that I knew I was hot on the right trail, for Washington Irving mentioned that these items were once to be seen at the "Masons' Arms" in Miles Lane, at a time when part of the tavern was hired as a church club. I hastened to find out whether the "Masons' Arms" or Miles Lane were still in existence. I passed through Crooked Lane, across Arthur Street

and down some stone steps, and found Miles Lane . . . but no inn . . . no vestige of the "Masons' Arms." A few steps brought me to St. Magnus and here I hoped to find Bob Preston waiting for me. I found my way into a small, stone-flagged yard at the rear of the vestry—a place hemmed in by the latticed girders and walls of huge modern buildings—and there he was. Yes, there he was !

Robert Preston, late drawer at the "Boar's Head" Tavern in Great Eastcheap, who departed this life Anno Dom. March 16th, 1730. The large upright grave slab was affixed to the wall of a warehouse, and on its sculptured head-piece were bunches of grapes and grinning skulls . . . the emblems of conviviality and death.

Having found Preston's stone, I turned to find the drinking cup and tobacco box.

In Irving's book the box is described in the following words :—

"A japanned iron tobacco-box, of gigantic size, out of which, I was told, the vestry had smoked at their stated meetings since time immemorial ; and which was never suffered to be profaned by vulgar hands, or used on common occasions. I received it with becoming reverence ; but what was my delight, at beholding on its cover the identical painting of which I was in quest ! There was displayed the outside of the 'Boar's Head' Tavern, and before the door was to be seen the whole convivial group at table in full revel ; pictured with that wonderfully fidelity and force with which the portraits of renowned generals and commodores are

illustrated on tobacco-boxes, for the benefit of posterity. Lest, however, there should be any mistake, the cunning limner had warily inscribed the names of Prince Hal and Falstaff on the bottoms of their chairs.

"On the inside of the cover was an inscription, nearly obliterated, recording that this box was the gift of Sir Richard Gore, for the use of the vestry meetings at the 'Boar's Head' Tavern, and that it was 'repaired and beautified by his successor, Mr. John Packard, 1767.'"

The drinking-cup bears the inscription of having been the gift of Sir Francis Wythers.

To my great disappointment I found that the "Boar's Head" relics were not on view. It appears they are locked up in a safe and only to be seen by making an application to the vicar. However, the important thing is that these two links with the "Boar's Head" are now in safe keeping. If it strikes the reader as an extraordinary thing that a church should guard the tobacco-box and goblet which once were the possessions of a tavern, surely it restores life's illogical balance when I can tell him that the last proprietor of the "Boar's Head" bequeathed the tavern to St. Michael's Church, toward the supporting of a chaplain. If we credit Washington Irving the vestry meetings were regularly held at the tavern; "but it was observed the old Boar never held up his head under church government. He gradually declined, and finally gave his last gasp about thirty years since."

The only other link with the famous hostelry is a boar's head, sculptured in high relief on stone, now

in the Guildhall Museum. This tablet was built into the façade of the second "Boar's Head" Tavern, built after the Great Fire. It bears the initials I.T. and the date 1668.

Opposite Pudding Lane is Talbot Court, where, in an elbow of the passage, is the "Ship" Tavern, the chief attraction of which is its seclusion. In Arthur Street is the "Ticket Porter," a tavern which bears a puzzling name for one who is not versed in riverside history. The Fellowship of Porters was incorporated in 1646, with the city arms for their badge, and the Alderman of Billingsgate ward for their Governor. In the old days they claimed the exclusive privilege of unloading all vessels coming into the Port of London laden with corn, malt, seeds, potatoes, fruit, and fish.

Charles Dickens introduces a Ticket Porter as a character in his Christmas story, *The Chimes*.

Those who are interested in the old Fellowship Porters' Company will find a collection of their badges and tallies in the Guildhall Museum. The tally consisted of an oblong leather pierced with holes threaded with a leather thong. This was worn by the porter on his breast, and enabled him to keep a record of his loads as a check to the official account. This he did by removing the thong from one hole for each load carried. There is an account of Fellowship Porters in Middlesex and Hertfordshire in *Notes and Queries*, Vol. I, 1895, pp. 46-52.

Upper Thames Street, from the Vintners' Hall to Puddle Dock, will produce some interesting taverns. The exquisite workmanship of the copper screen at the gate of the Vintners' Hall should be examined. The

two swans which are introduced in the crescent-shaped grille remind us that the Vintners' Company have the privilege of keeping swans upon the water of the Thames—a privilege which is only shared by the Dyers Company and the Royal Family. The "White Swan" Tavern in College Hill derives its title from the Vintners' Company.

It is said that the "Swan-markers" of the Crown and the two Companies meet each July in this inn, preparatory to making their journey to the upper reaches of the Thames where the marking or the "Upping" of the cygnets is carried out. The Junior Warden of the Vintners' is known as the Swan Warden.

The "Crown and Sugar-loaf" in Garlick Hill boasts an interesting sign.

If the reader can look back on a fairly long life the sign of the sugarloaf in the glass door-panel of this inn will be familiar to him. As the carboys of the chemist—those moons of gold and green and crimson—were the distinguishing sign of the druggist, so the tall, conical sugarloaf was the symbol of the grocer's shop. Sometimes they were made of wood and suspended from iron frames on the fronts of the shops, and sometimes they were actual sugarloaves exhibited in the windows. The only business which now retains such a sign, is, curiously enough, the oldest grocer's shop in the City of London. This is the firm of Davidson, Newman and Co., in Creechurch Lane. In 1890 the business moved from 44 Fenchurch Street, where it had traded since the year 1650. The sign is a reproduction of three sugarloaves and a crown,

inscribed with the date 1650. Recently in clearing the site of a warehouse in Thames Street several sugar-loaf moulds were found. About a hundred years ago there were many sugar-refiners in the side streets near the Thames, and those moulds are relics of this now forgotten industry. Boiled syrup was poured into the moulds and left to crystallize; the useless liquid drained away through a small hole in the cone-shaped end. The loaves of sugar were delivered to the grocer just as they were turned out of the moulds, and it was the business of the grocer to cut them into small cubes with a chopper.

About 1830 a new process in sugar refining rendered the moulds useless, and the then familiar conical sugarloaf became obsolete. The court at the side of the inn was probably the site of a sugar refinery in the early years of the nineteenth century.

After the reader has refreshed himself he should view the old archway from Sugarloaf Court, at the back of the building. A small window in the vaulted passage still bears the notice "Spirit Stores"; here spirit was once served out to passers-by. Almost opposite to this inn is the church of St. James Garlickhithe, so called because garlic used to be sold here on the river-bank. Rebuilt by Wren, 1676-83, it was in this church that Steele was first impressed by "the excellency of the Common Prayer," the service being read "so distinctly, so emphatically, and so fervently, that it was next to an impossibility to be inattentive" (*Spectator*, No. 147). The reader was the Rev. Philip Stubbs, then rector, and afterwards Archdeacon of St. Albans.

The projecting clock has a charming gilded figure of St. James which shows him as a wandering pilgrim, with staff and scallop-shell of the shrine of St. James of Compostella. The keystone over the doorway, representing a cherub's head, is very fine.

CHAPTER VIII

HELLO, CLERKENWELL !

CLERKENWELL has not touched the imagination of many writers, and it is probable that its local fiction could be collected in about a dozen novels. George Gissing's *The Nether World* deals avowedly with Clerkenwell Close and the neighbourhood ; Pett Ridge tells the story of a Clerkenwell laundress and her son in *Mrs. Galer's Business* ; George Du Maurier's *Peter Ibbetson* has local associations with the Wharton Street district ; and A. T. Sheppard's *Running Horse Inn* has geographical relationship with the Spa Fields. The association of *Barnaby Rudge*, *Our Mutual Friend*, and *Pickwick Papers* with this district has often been marked before, and if we bring into the list three of Thackeray's novels and Arnold Bennett's *Riceyman Steps* and *Elsie and the Child* we shall about exhaust our collection of regional narratives.

Perhaps Bennett's *Riceyman Steps* gives the most intimate pictures of the strange, forsaken squares, and back streets of Clerkenwell yet written. The reader will have no difficulty in connecting *Riceyman Steps*, "a gentle, broad acclivity leading from King's Cross Road up to Riceyman Square," with the steps which now lead up to Granville Square. The grey-granite

stairs are locally known as Plum Pudding Steps, and Bennett has faithfully described this spot :

“ Riceyman Steps, twenty in number, are divided by a half-landing into two series of ten. The man stopped on the half-landing and swung round with a casual air of purposelessness. Below him and straight in front he saw a cobbled section of King’s Cross Road—a hell of noise and dust and dirt beneath the bedroom windows of a defenceless populace. On the far side of the road were, conspicuous to the right, the huge, red ‘ Nell Gwynn ’ Tavern, set on the site of Nell’s still huger palace, and conspicuous to the left, red Rowton House, surpassing in immensity even Nell’s vanished palace, dividing into hundreds and hundreds of clean cubicles for the accommodation of the defeated and the futile at a shilling a night. Nearer to the man who could look two ways lay the tiny open space (not open to vehicular traffic) which was officially included in the title, “ Riceyman Steps.”

The man on the steps is Henry Earlfoward, an antiquarian bookseller, whose one hobby is the history of Clerkenwell, and through the meditations of this character the author gives us many delightful descriptions of the district. We may apply to Granville Square, as it stands to-day, Bennett’s picture of Riceyman Square in Chapter X and find every word fitting in exactly with the picture.

Granville Square was built in 1841, and a greater student of Clerkenwell than Bennett’s “ Earlfoward ” lived here for some years at the house bearing the number 30. For that reason we tolerate and almost

forgive the square for its squalor and indolence.

The local historian I refer to is William J. Pinks, who wrote the bulky and fascinating *History of Clerkenwell* (1865). The following passage, in which we get a pen-picture of the forlorn and desolating Square, is characteristic of Arnold Bennett, of his keen interest which notes every class of fact, and how everything is done, and how everybody lives :

“The Square had once been genteel ; it ought now to have been picturesque, but was not. It was merely decrepit, foul, and slatternly. Neither electricity nor telephones had ever invaded it, and scores of windows still had venetian blinds. All men except its inhabitants and the tax-collector, the rate-collector, and the school attendance officer, had forgotten Riceyman Square.

“It lay now frowsily supine in a needed Sunday indolence after the week’s hard labour. All the upper windows were shut and curtained, and most of the ground-floor windows. Here and there a housewife had hung her doormats and canaries on the railings to take the holy Sabbath air ; and newspapers, fresh as newly gathered fruit, waited folded on doorsteps for students of crime and passion to awake from their beds in darkened and stifling rooms. Also little milk-cans with tarnished brass handles had been suspended in clusters on the railings. Cats only, in their elegance and their detached disdain, rose superior to the terrific environment. The determined church bells ceaselessly jangled.”

From Granville Square to Wilmington Square I

addressed my steps, and again opened *Riceyman Steps* at the page which tells how Mr. Earlforward shows Mrs. Arb some bits of old Clerkenwell :

“ In a few minutes they were at the corner of a vast square—you could have put four Riceymans into it—of lofty, reddish houses, sombre and shabby, with a great railed garden and great trees in the middle, and a wide roadway round.

“ ‘ Look at that ! ’ said Mr. Earlforward eagerly, pointing to the sign, ‘ Wilmington Square.’ ‘ Ever heard of it before ? ’

“ Mrs. Arb shook her astonished head.

“ ‘ No. And nobody has. But it’s here. That’s London, that is ! Practically every house has been divided into tenements. Used to be very well-to-do people here, you know ! ’

“ ‘ Now I’ll show you another sort of a square,’ he went on aloud. ‘ But it’s over on the other side of Farringdon Road. Not far ! Not far ! No distances here ! ’

“ Coldbath Square easily surpassed even Riceyman Square in squalor and foulness ; and it was far more picturesque and deeper sunk in antiquity, save for the huge, awful block of tenements in the middle. The glimpses of interiors were appalling. At the corners stood sinister groups of young men, mysteriously well-dressed, doing nothing whatever, and in certain doorways honest-faced old men with mufflers round their necks and wearing ancient pea-jackets.”

When Aubrey Beardsley left Brighton Grammar School he obtained a clerkship in the office of Mr. E.

Carrett, architect and surveyor, in Wilmington-square. Here his income matched his years—it was just £16 per annum.

The doorway of Beardsley's old office is certainly not inviting. A low coffin-lid door leads into a gloomy tunnel of a hall. The house is no longer used as an office, but is let to lodgers of various degrees of dinginess, and it requires a little effort of the imagination to picture the trim and jaunty figure of Beardsley against this grim, ochreish background. I saw a card in the window, "Rooms to rent to gentlemen." I rang the bell and was shown a room that the landlady offered me for fifteen shillings a week; or if I would be willing to ascend to the top of the house and take an apartment, which was approached through the room of a literary old gent., it would be only ten shillings. I suggested that we should go up and interview him. We did so, and I found the "literary gent." immersed in a mysterious and vast den of books. I saw at a glance that he was a book-dealer. He was very courteous and polite, but he had never heard Beardsley's name in connection with the house. The landlady protested that "no man by the name of Beersley has had no rooms from her—if he has been living here he called hisself sumphink else, which was like as not, as most lodgers are dark horses these days—but surely nobody was going to blame a respectable landlady for that!"

Passing from Wilmington Square, and turning one's steps towards Bowling Green Lane, one comes to St. John's Square, a block of buildings which provides the accommodation for some of the most unusual

trades in London. Here one notices a briar pipe manufacturer ; an importer of toys and conjurers' tricks ; dial writers ; clock-case makers ; glass-benders. . . . The spot has several descriptive touches in *Riceyman Steps* :

“ There was an enormous twilit shoeing-forge next door to the Chancery of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and though it was Sunday morning the air rang with the hammering of a blacksmith who held a horse's hind leg between his knees. Then she caught the hum of unseen machinery and inquired about it. Then the signs over the places of business attracted her ; she became charmingly girlish.

“ ‘ Rouge. Wholesale only.’ ‘ Glass matchers to the trade.’ ‘ I want five million moleskins and ten million rabbitskins. Do not desert your old friend. Cash on the nail.’ And painted, too, on a board ! Not just written ! ‘ Gorgonzola cheese manufacturers.’ Oh ! The mere thought of it ! No, I shall never touch Gorgonzola again after this ! ”

The reader will find Bennett's local colour still accurate in every detail. Here at No. 16 St. John Lane is Hutchinson's Rouge Factory, established in 1803. An old-world looking place with stone steps leading up to a solid doorway with an overhanging canopy, and here, near the old priory gateway, is the shoeing forge with the sooty-faced smiths swinging their sledges, driving up the sparks with their bellows.

I cannot trace when the “ Jerusalem ” Tavern was first opened in the priory gateway. There are several old woodcuts of it in John Wilson's *Concise Account of*



ST. JOHN'S GATE, CLERKENWELL

The above drawing shows this interesting relic at the period when it was used as a tavern

St. John's Gate published in 1869. Probably, when it was the residence of Cave the Printer, and a meeting-place for Samuel Johnson, Goldsmith, and Savage, a kind of informal club came into existence. One thing we do know—the original “Jerusalem” Tavern was situated at the north-east corner of Jerusalem Passage, which leads from the Little Square to Aylesbury Street. Another “Jerusalem” Tavern stood at the north-west corner of Red Lion Street, and here John Britton was bound apprentice to a wine-merchant :

“In snatches of time stolen from the fuming cellar, Britton used to visit Mr. Essex, a literary dial-painter, who kindly lent him useful books, and introduced him to his future partner in letters, Mr. Edward Brayley, and to Dr. Trusler and Dr. Towers, the literary celebrities of Clerkenwell.

“This Dr. Trusler was a literary preacher, who, in 1787, resided at No. 14 Red Lion Street, and supported himself by selling MS. sermons to the idle clergy. His father had been proprietor of the fashionable ‘Marybone Gardens,’ and his sister made the seed and plum-cake for that establishment. Trusler, a clever, pushing man, was at first an apothecary and then a curate. Cowper, in *The Task*, laughed at Trusler as ‘a grand caterer and dry nurse of the church.’ He seems to have been an impudent projector, for when told by Dr. Ter-rick, Bishop of London, that he offered his clergy inducements to idleness, Trusler replied that he made £150 a year by his manuscript sermons, and that, for a benefice of the same value he would willingly discontinue their sale. He afterwards

started as printer, at 62 Wardour Street, and published endless ephemeral books on carving, law, declamation, farming, etc.—twenty-five separate works in all. He died in 1820.”

In William Maitland's *History of London* (1739) I found the following note of a memorial stone in the Church of St. James at Clerkenwell :—

Sir William Wood lies very near this Stone,
In's Time of Archery excell'd by none,
Few were his Equals ; and this noble Art
Hath suffer'd now in the most tender Part,
Long did he love the Honour of the Bow,
To him long Love tho' that alone did owe.
But how can Art secure ? Or what can save
Extreme old Age from an appointed Grave ?
Surviving Archers much your Loss lament,
That in Respect bestow'd this Monument ;
Where whistling Arrows did his Worth proclaim,
And eternize his Memory and his Name.

Ob. Sep. 4. Ann. Dom. 1691. Ætat. 82.

The title of Sir, given to Wood, in this Epitaph, was only a compliment of his Brethren Archers, by way of pre-eminence, for his dexterity in shooting.

From the moment I read how “ whistling arrows did eternize his memory,” Wood was a marked man. I felt that I must know more of this old archer and his connection with Clerkenwell, and I set myself to hunt him through the records. As a beginning I approached the British Museum Library, and with a beginner's luck found a line of inquiry—a thin octavo pamphlet of eighty pages entitled *The Bowman's Glory*, written by this same Sir William Wood. It was printed by S.R. and sold by Edw. Gough, at Cow

Cross, 1682. In faded handwriting an inscription in the fly-leaf read " Edward Philliess, his book . . . given by Wm. Wood who was buried by the Company of Archers all with their Bowes and Arrows, and showt three times over his grave."

There could have been only one company of archers at Clerkenwell—the Finsbury Archers, now existing as the Honourable Artillery Company, so we may assume that Wood was an officer in this body of men. Do the H.A.C. ever visit their old officer's tomb at Clerkenwell? Did the H.A.C. hold a bi-centenary festival at this shrine in 1891? May I venture to say to the Colonel of the H.A.C. : " Here's a chance for a celebration and merry-making at the shrine of one of the regiment's real notabilities."

In Wood's time the great archery grounds were at Finsbury Fields, and an old ballad runs :

The King is into Finsbury Field,
Marching in battle ray ;
And after follows bold Robin Hood,
And all his yeomen gay.

The " Sir John Oldcastle " Tavern in Coldbath Fields was a favourite rendezvous for Clerkenwell Archers. We quickly forget that it was the bow that was the all-conquering weapon of Englishmen, and indeed it was the bow that made it possible for England to place a great and powerful navy on the seas. Our forefathers were especially solicitous to train up a race of expert archers for the defence of our shores against foreign aggression, and, even in 1350, the king found it necessary to reproach the " muddled oafs and flannelled fools " as Kipling did long after

him. The following letter was sent to the sheriffs of London at that date :—

“ The King to the Sheriffs of London greeting. Because the People of our Realm, as well of good Quality as mean, have commonly in their Sports before these Times exercised the Skill of shooting Arrows, whence it is well known, that Honour and Profit have accrued to our whole Realm, and to us, by the Help of God, no small Assistance in our warlike Acts ; and now the said Skill being, as it were, wholly laide aside, the same People please themselves in hurling of Stones and Wood and Iron ; and some in Hand-ball, Foot-ball, Bandy-ball and in Cambuck, qu. and Cock-fighting ; and some also apply themselves to other dishonest Games, and less profitable or useful ; whereby the said Realm is likely in a short Time to become destitute of Archers.

“ We, willing to apply a seasonable Remedy to this, command you, that in Places in the foresaid City, as well within the Liberties as without, where you shall see it expedient, you cause publick Proclamation to be made, that every one of the said City, strong in Body, at leisure Times on Holidays, use in their Recreations Bows and Arrows, or Pellets or Bolts, and learn and exercise the Art of Shooting, forbidding all and singular on our Behalf, that they do not after any manner apply themselves to the throwing of Stones, Wood, Iron, Hand-ball, Foot-ball, Bandy-ball, Cambuck or Cock-fighting, nor such other like vain Plays, which have no Profit in them, or concern themselves therein, under

Pain of Imprisonment. Witness the King at Westminster, the Twelfth Day of June."

The "whistling arrows" mentioned on William Wood's memorial, were ceremonial shafts, having a pile of horn which made a shrill sound when discharged.

In St. John Street the "Windmill" Inn is worthy of attention, for it dates back some hundreds of years and during the reigns of Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth, the Middlesex magistrates met here. As the "Windmill" was a popular meeting-place for country carriers, the combined clatter of horses, vans, and coaches on the granite-paved courtyard shocked the outraged ears of the grave Justice Shallows, and they appealed to James I to grant them a piece of ground upon which to build a new sessions hall. The appeal was granted, and a new hall was built nearly opposite the "Windmill" Inn. One of the original coping-stones from Hicks's Hall has been built into the wall (near the second-floor window) of a house of No. 35a, between St. John's Lane and Peter Lane. The inscription on it is too far away to read.

The once-famous "Hicks's Hall," whence one of the milestone distances from London was computed, "stood," says the indefatigable Mr. Pinks, "about 200 yards from Smithfield, in the widest part of St. John's Street, near the entrance to St. John's Lane." Hicks's Hall was a stately house, built in 1612, as a sessions house for Clerkenwell, by that great citizen, Sir Baptist Hicks, silk mercer. Sir Baptist seems to have been a most wealthy and influential citizen, and to have lent King James, who was careless and ex-

travagant enough, vast sums of money, besides supplying the court with stuffs and cloths, of tissue and gold, and silks, satins, and velvets, the courtiers getting very much entangled with the rich mercer's bills and bonds. In 1614 the Earl of Somerset borrowed Sir Baptist's house at Kensington, and it is certain that he lived with all the splendour of a nobleman. In 1628 Sir Baptist Hicks was advanced to the peerage as Viscount Campden. He died in the year 1629, and was buried at Campden, in his native county of Gloucestershire.

A mask of compo has disguised the original aspect of the "Windmill" Inn, but the back of it shows some mellow-looking brickwork. The coach-yard, reached by an archway, is now a parking ground for steam waggons, and some of the carriers' sheds and goods-offices are still standing.

At No. 33 Laystall Street the reader who is interested in out-of-the-way trades will find the workshops of Leonardi, the plaster-figure maker. Here one may purchase Roman Catholic images, bird baths or grotesque drinking-mugs.

Hatton Garden takes us from Clerkenwell Road to Holborn Viaduct, ending near Ely Place. At a small doorway (with a crescent-shaped grille above it) near the post-office at the Holborn end of Hatton Garden, a paved passage slopes down to "Ye Olde Mitre Taverne" and leads through to Ely Place. The Mitre is a modernized old house with a stone mitre sign, dated 1546, and an old cherry tree which, it is said, dates back to Queen Elizabeth's time.

Old Bailey of unhappy memories connects Ludgate Hill with Newgate Street. Here stood the gloomy

Newgate Prison, demolished in 1902-3. Numerous relics of the old prison may be seen at the London Museum, including the last pinioning strap used in 1902 at Newgate, and the oak door of the condemned cell, with massive locks and bolts. Under the shadow of the present Central Criminal Court is the two-hundred-years-old "King of Denmark" Tavern which under its former title of the "Magpie and Stump" was the resort of the jostling, craning, voluble crowds who waited to view the public executions at Old Newgate. At the side of the inn is Bishop's Court with a "Dutch Kitchen" saloon and quaint, old-world dining rooms on the first floor. The "King of Denmark" has a front of hard and battered wood, and its bars have low-planked ceilings . . . there is nothing new, gaudy, flippant, or luxurious here. In an age of marble pillars, plate glass and showiness here is a house that neither claims to be a shrine of Ormuzd nor of Ahriman. . . . It is not a restaurant or a bun-shop. It is a tavern. It is a haunt of plain-spoken folk. It is mentioned by Larwood and Hotten in the following words :—

"Visits of European monarchs were also commemorated by complimentary signs. One of the oldest was the King of Denmark, and few kings better than he deserved the exalted place at the alehouse door ; yet, such is the ingratitude of the world, that he seems now completely forgotten. The sign originated in the reign of James I, who married a daughter of Christian IV, King of Denmark. In July, 1606, the royal father-in-law came over on a visit, when the two kings began 'bousing' and carousing right royally, the court, of

course, duly following the example. ‘I came here a day or two before the Danish king came,’ says Sir John Harrington, ‘and from that day he did come till this hour, I have been well-nigh overwhelmed with carousal and sport of all kinds. I think the Dane has strangely wrought on our English nobles ; for those whom I could never get to taste good liquor, now follow the fashion and wallow in beastly delights. The ladies abandon their society, and are seen to roll about in intoxication,’ &c. So late as thirty years ago, not less than three of these signs were left. the most notorious being in the Old Bailey. It used to be open all night for the sale of creature comforts to the drunkard, the thief, the nightwalker, and profligates of every description. Slang was the language of the place, and doubtless the refreshments were mostly paid for with stolen money. On execution nights. the landlord used to reap a golden harvest ; then there were such scenes of drunkenness as must have done the old king on the signboard good to survey, and made him wish to be inside.”

CHAPTER IX

IN AND ABOUT SMITHFIELD

LEAVING Holborn Viaduct by St. Sepulchre's Church we turn down Giltspur Street, passing on the left Cock Lane and Pie Corner, marked by a little wooden figure of a naked boy with folded arms, affixed over a doorway. Here stood the "Fortune of War" public-house. The "Boy of Pie Corner" is a landmark which takes us to the Great Fire of 1666, for he was placed on this spot to mark where it ended. The old saying tells us that the fire "began at Pudding Lane and ended at Pie Corner," but this must only be accepted to illustrate the course of the fire from its starting point to its limit in the west. Cripplegate was in flames for two days after the fire had been stopped here. An elaborate memorial tablet, long since removed to the Guildhall Museum, was set up in 1681 on the house in which the Great Fire broke out (No. 25 Pudding Lane), and those who are interested may still decipher its quaint inscription :

"Here by ye permission of Heaven, Hell broke loose upon this Protestant City from the malicious hearts of barbarous Papists by ye hand of their Agent Hubert, who confessed and on ye Ruines of this Place declared the Fact for which he was hanged (vizt), that here began that dredfull Fire which is described and perpetuated on and by the neighbour-

ing pillar, erected Anno 1681 in the Mayoralty of Sr Patience Ward, Kt."

Leaving Pie Corner we arrive at West Smithfield—a large open space and a spot full of old reminiscences. It was frequently chosen as the scene of mediæval duels and as a place of torture and public burnings.

"Here that stern tyrant, Henry VIII, burnt poor wretches who denied his ecclesiastical supremacy; here Mary burnt Protestants, and here Elizabeth burnt Anabaptists. In 1539 (Henry VIII) Forest, an Observant friar, was cruelly burnt in Smithfield, for denying the king's supremacy, the flames being lit with 'David Darvel Gatheren,' a once sacred image from Wales. Latimer preached patience to the friar, while he hung by the waist and struggled for life. And here, too, was burnt Joan Boucher, the Maid of Kent, for some theological refinement as to the incarnation of Christ, Cranmer almost forcing Edward VI to sign the poor creature's death-warrant. 'What, my lord!' said Edward, 'will ye have me send her quick to the devil, in her error? I shall lay the charge therefore upon you, my Lord Cranmer, before God.'"

From West Smithfield we may turn down Little Britain and cast an eye on the "Swan and Horeshoe" Tavern, rebuilt in 1898, but, Powers be praised, not re-named "ye olde." Personally, I always view any place called "ye olde" with the most ineradicable suspicion, for such a designation smacks of pose and affectation. There are certain inns in London which rather overdo the showman business. We grow weary of the treasured knick-knacks of the show place.

. . . Doctor Johnson's hat, and Doctor Johnson's knives and forks. . . . Phew ! Whether such are spurious (they usually are) or whether they are genuine, the spirit of the past seems to shy at the first sight of them. The pilgrim who cannot summon the atmosphere of romance until the "relics" are produced is a sorry fellow. But if we would hear again the bursts of laughter and the merry songs of the "Swan and Horseshoe," and watch the log-fire setting the bottle-green casement windows a-twinkle, there is a more powerful medicament than any gewgaw relics. Ready to our hand is Washington Irving's essay on "Little Britain" which gives, with many delightful personal touches, some vivid pictures of club nights at the "Swan and Horseshoe," "Half-Moon and Grapes," and the "Cock and Crown."

At the side of the "Swan and Horseshoe" is Montague Court with a pavement of worn flag-stones and a row of ancient houses . . . possibly unsanitary, but satisfying to the eye of an artist.

I am not yet a venerable person, yet I have seen many changes about London, and perhaps one of those I most regret is the disappearance of the old "Dick Whittington" Inn at Cloth Fair. Reader, did you ever visit that old hostelry in those fat, drowsy days before the Great War? Before the world was so difficult to live in? What, never? Of course you know where it stood? Again no? Well, it stood near by, at the Middle Street end of Cloth Fair, and you can follow the passages of Bartholomew Close around till you come to the "Hand and Shears." Opposite to this tavern stood the "Dick Whittington" until

the vandals fell on it with crowbars and fiendish yells in the year 1916. It was the oldest inn in London . . . but the modern spirit of grab-all and commercialism cares not for such things.

The "Dick Whittington" had a high-ridged roof, and delightful projecting eaves and overhanging floors. Lights winked invitingly through slant-eyed dormer windows. When I first found this little inn, the gnarled, smoky rafters in the parlour stooped to brush the hat of a tall man, but the bars were repaired and enlarged some years before it was demolished. However, before the place was modernized, it was pleasant to sit there and listen to the circling talk of the cobbler, tailor, and compositor, and sip a tall tankard of ale . . . it was pleasant to sit through the winter's amethystine dusk and watch the fire and its play of shadows . . . sportive, fantastic shadows which hovered and darted, and sometimes made a long arm as if to snatch the very tankard out of one's hand. But such nights have disappeared with the last bricks of the "Dick Whittington."

There is a painting of the inn at the London Museum, near St. James's Palace; and two satyrs from its corner posts are to be seen at the Guildhall Museum. The satyrs are carved in wood and date from 1550.

At 41 and 42 Cloth Fair are two picturesque old dwellings with projecting eaves and bulging upper floors. The wooden caps on the roofs and dormer windows are unique in London. Here, during the Middle Ages, the Cloth Fair was held, "to which came merchants from Flanders and Italy, with their precious

wares for the sons and daughters of England."

Several courts running from Cloth Fair to Long Lane harbour inns of long standing. There is the "Rising Sun" in Sun Court, and the "Barley Mow" in Barley Mow Passage—both old-established, but without any features to commend them to the antiquary, unless he is feeling in need of refreshment. The Early English archway (about 1240) which leads to the church of St. Bartholomew the Great, is extremely fine. The little statue of St. Bartholomew was added after the Great War by Sir Aston Webb, the architect, as a memorial to his son killed in action.

A Lyons's tea-shop backs on to Bartholomew Close, the rear windows looking towards a small inn called the "Coach and Horses." In May, 1927, the house-breakers were at work breaking up this ancient hostelry, and I suppose it will be entirely wiped out of existence next time I pass through the Close. Through the arched entrance to the inn stood some very ancient stables where the coaches and horses of the most thriving tradesmen of Little Britain were lodged.

This "Coach and Horses" was probably once of the *hospitum*, within the western gate of the monastery, and in its cellars are the remains of a crypt. Even up to about 1800 the house was the property of the Church of St. Bartholomew, and was the sexton's abode. The "Coach and Horses" is mentioned in *The Curiosities of London* by John Timbs, where it is stated that a subterranean passage communicated between the inn and the church.

At No. 1 Middle Street, Cloth Fair, is the "Hand

and Shears" Tavern which has, architecturally, nothing whatever to recommend it. Its front is stuccoed and painted and befouled with smoke, and the eye cannot rest anywhere upon its exterior without pain or a feeling of melancholy. Yet this is a house of considerable antiquity, for it has been connected with the cloth-making trade and Bartholomew Fair from the earliest times of which there is record. The Court of Pie-poudre, or Dusty Feet, which had jurisdiction over offences committed in the Fair, was held within its walls, and from its steps the Lord Mayor and the Prior of St. Bartholomew's proclaimed the Fair open. In the early times delegates of the Merchant Tailors, with their silver measure, attended the "Hand and Shears," to try the measures of the drapers and clothiers who traded at the booths of the fair.

Ned Ward, the "London Spy," visited the "Hand and Shears" during the Fair, and he tells us that his beverage was "small beer bittered with colocynth."

In the year 1698 a Frenchman, Monsieur Sorbiere, visiting London, says :

"I was at Bartholomew Fair. It consists mostly of toy-shops, also finery and pictures, ribbon-shops—no books ; many shops of confectioners, where any woman may commodiously be treated. Knavery is here in perfection, dextrous cutpurses and pick-pockets. I went to see the dancing on the ropes, which was admirable. Coming out, I met a man that would have took off my hat, but I secured it, and was going to draw my sword, crying, 'Begar ! You rogue ! Morbleu !' etc., when on a sudden I had a hundred people about me crying, 'Here,

monsieur, see Jephthah's Rash Vow !' 'Here, monsieur, see the Tall Dutchwoman !' 'See the Tiger,' says another. 'See the Horse and no Horse, whose tail stands where his head should do.' 'See the German Artist, monsieur !' 'See the Siege of Namur !' So that betwixt rudeness and civility I was forced to get into a fiacre and, with an air of haste and a full trot, got home to my lodgings."

In 1702 the following advertisement appeared relative to the fair :—

"At the Great Booth over against the Hospital Gate, in Bartholomew Fair, will be seen the famous company of rope-dancers, they being the greatest performers of men, women, and children that can be found beyond the seas, so that the world cannot parallel them for dancing on the low rope, vaulting on the high rope, and for walking on the slack and sloaping ropes, outdoing all others to that degree, that it has highly recommended them, both in Bartholomew Fair and May Fair last, to all the best persons of quality in England. And by all are owned to be the only amazing wonders of the world in everything they do. It is there you will see the Italian Scaramouch dancing on the ropes, with a wheelbarrow before him with two children and a dog in it, and with a duck on his head, who sings to the company, and causes much laughter. The whole entertainment will be so extremely fine and diverting, as never was done by any but this company alone."

Bartholomew Fair was originated by Rahere in 1133,

and was officially proclaimed at the Court of Piepoudre for the last time in 1855. In 1668 our old friend Pepys paid a visit to the Fair and made the following piquant entry in his journal :—

“To Bartholomew Fair, and saw there several sights ; among others, the mare that tells money, and many things, to admiration ; and among others, come to me, when she was bid to go to him of the company, that most loved a pretty wench in a corner. And this did cost me 12d. to the horse, which I had flung him before, and did give me occasion to kiss a mighty belle fille.”

CHAPTER X

SOME CITY TAVERNS

OF all the legacies left by an early age to succeeding generations that of our taverns and inns might be presumed to have been so liberally provided with literature, textbook and annotation as to leave but little balance in hand for the modern topographer. We have it on the unimpeachable authority of the wise and equitable King Solomon that in his day there was no new thing under the sun. If, at that comparatively early period, novelty was utterly exhausted, what hope is left me of anything of the sort in this book?

The wonderful powers of the wireless receiver and television are very much in the air at the present moment, and we congratulate ourselves with tolerable frequency and complacency on such discoveries. These things are positively new, we say, without any fear of being contradicted. And yet we cannot be certain that other races have not derived the same advantages from these contrivances many centuries before our modern scientists thought of them. We are told that the "germ" of every invention goes back and back, until at last it is shrouded from our investigations by the impenetrable mists of antiquity, for as Bacon neatly expresses it, "There is nothing new but what is old."

And, on the other hand, when I write as a daring explorer of London inns it is perhaps permissible to defend my presumption in so doing by reversing Bacon's phrase that it may read, "There is nothing old but what is new."

But in these days when the modern child is hurled into a world which changes from hour to hour, it is far more difficult than it has ever been before to convince him that anything is new. The growing note of our race is to forget the past, side-step the present, and live in the future. The idea is being developed more powerfully every day. Thus, for instance, there is the school which thinks that science will invade the future, and, just as the flying-machine was quicker than the motor-car, so some keen miracle of mechanism will be quicker than the aeroplane; and so on until we find the secret of H. G. Wells' *Time Machine*. Nobody then will worry about our ancient inns and churches. In a future age the tourists will be whisked off in time machines to be shown over the scene of some great battle which will be fought after they are dead, or to visit the birthplace of a future Shakespeare or Napoleon.

Every day it is getting easier to forget the past. The battering rams of commerce are sweeping away all our old buildings. There is hardly a corner in London where the rows of ancient houses are not under heavy bombardment. The crash of tumbling bricks, as the wrecker plies his crowbar, mingles with the rat-tat-tat of the riveters. Another row of dear, homely houses are coming down; another pile of grey masonry is going up.

The change that old London has undergone architecturally is reflected in the faces of those who tread its streets. With the disappearance of the red-tiled, bulgy, Tudor houses we seem to have lost the red-faced, portly frequenters of our inns and taverns. "So much the better" is a not-infrequent answer to this remark. We are told that these uncommercial, unaffected idlers discouraged honest work. We are told that they were soakers and spendthrifts. Possibly these charges are well-grounded, but, nevertheless, as a Londoner who has known many members of this brotherhood, I look back on them with affection as symbols of an unhurried, complacent age, when the bonhomie and mellowness of life had not been choked by commercialism.

The massive piles of grey stone which now house the London workers are reflected in their occupations, their attire, their manners, and their outlook on life. Their faces are as dull-hued and as indifferent as the granite walls. Their movements are uneasy, for they all see the hands of a time clock urging them back to their jobs. See them pushing and pawing along the Strand and Cheapside to the nearest quick-lunch counter. Lunch to them is mechanical, an incident in the day's routine. The women outnumber the men four to one. They all herd together in the suffocatingly hot coffee-shops (you cannot call such loathly holes restaurants) and sit over cups of coffee and tea at sloppy marble tables. No honest mahogany; no honest tankards of ale. They chew their words with their buns, for the leisurely conversation of the old tavern days is a dead thing. The apparel of the girls

and men is the extreme of the prevailing mode—a mode that seems to aim at producing mannish flappers and effeminate youths. Whichever way you look you may see a tumbling rushing tide of humanity—impatient, unsympathetic, over-modern.

But perhaps old London is merely making experiments and in years to come will become once more her former delightful self. I hope so ! She has much good in her—so much pluck, endurance, and honest humour, that it will indeed be calamitous if her soul is eternally debased by the modern gods of vulgarity and brawling commercialism.

Certainly modern life with its picture-palaces and dance halls has put the inn and its supporters in a quite unprecedented difficulty.

Boniface did not grudge the cinemas and other places of amusement their public, but when the enemies of our popular liberties drew up a time-table, showing his patrons the various periods during the day when it was lawful for them to be thirsty, he was consumed with indignation. However, the rights and wrongs of the present licence hours do not enter into this book. Possibly the early-closing of inns was a blessing in incognito, and the majority of publicans, I am certain, would vote against a return to the long hours which they were formerly forced to keep.

But in spite of the great commercial Mumbo Jumbo, rag-time, motor-cars, wireless, and the topsy-turvy course of modern life, the old inns do still survive, and what is more, some of them, after three or four hundred years, remain almost unchanged. If we say that our English inns are immortal and incorruptible

it is only saying what is immediate and true. Their old walls and ceilings must be saturated with the exhalations of human beings! Their rooms, doorways, and stairs have become, by long use and homeliness, dear to human hearts, and have become by immemorial traffic so intimately blended with that substance and thought of human lives, that they have contributed their part in the shaping of human characters. These old inns, thronged with the acts and thoughts of others, have helped to influence the mental habitudes of such men as Shakespeare, Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Herrick, and Raleigh. Who would deny their right to immortality?

No doubt the student of inns will visit the collection of mediæval and other tavern signs at the Guildhall Museum, and a perambulation around the city inns may well be started from this point. If the pilgrim leaves the Museum by the back gates he will face Mason's Avenue which connects Coleman Street and Basinghall Street. Entering this passage, "Ye Olde Dr. Butler's Head" will be found on the right.

It is a house quite in the old style, and it smiles with a grave and decorous invitation, as becomes a house which has such close associations with the medical profession. Inns have received kingships and have ruled dukedoms; inns have claimed to be generals, admirals, and even archbishops. But face to face with the "Butler's Head" you know that you are not up against any ordinary fellow. You know, in fact, that you are bowing to a full-blown Doctor of Medicine. One glance at Doctor Butler and you feel soothed. Let me introduce you. Doctor William Butler,

physician extraordinary to James I. This dates the tavern as about 1610.

Of Doctor Butler I have discovered very little ; but it is all splendid. He was a contented, happy-go-lucky fellow, with much less of severe poetry about him than boisterous prose. He was a doctor only by the courtesy of his friends, who knew the stamp of a learned man when they saw it. To the petty tradesman or the town beadle he was " Old Butler," just that and nothing more, but to the thousands of poor people he had helped and doctored he was a loyal and devoted friend. At the University of Cambridge he was noted for his outspokenness, his unconventionality and independence in thought and action. His parents were not certain about the profession which would best suit his temperament ; first they thought he would be a parson, then a lawyer, then a doctor. But William told them that his good stars had ordained him to be a Doctor of Mirth, and indeed it is as a Doctor of Mirth that his name shines throughout the records and documents which throw sidelights on his life. In 1572 the University of Cambridge granted him a licence to practise physic, but he never took the degree of M.D. But amongst all the world's quacks, if ever there was an honest one, it was old Doctor Butler, and, what is more, he became so famous that King James made him a Court Physician. You could not qualify for such a post merely by swagger and bluster : you had to be what you professed to be : you had to be a doctor right through. If you lost your head while extracting a royal molar you possibly lost your head at the Tower of London.

And there is this to be said of quacks, that they get their titles from their neighbours—that they are doctors in fact, whereas a doctor in the more academic sense, who comes to the title by books, can very easily be no doctor at all. His M.D. may be a practical joke of the Gods, and he may never do more than sit nervously on the edge of a chair by your bed and examine your tongue; but a fellow like Butler leans back in his chair and jests and orders his patients flagons of ale and porter-house steaks.

For many years Doctor Butler lived with his friend John Crane, an apothecary at Cambridge; and here he gathered around him a host of spirits congenial to his own, all lovers of good ale, good food, and good society. We have few enough of the Doctor's good sayings, some of which are very modern in spirit. Crane was a jolly fat fellow—a veritable G. K. Chesterton in girth. As Butler and he were walking home in a semi-inebriated condition one wet night they stumbled into a very miry dyke, Crane first and the Doctor on top of him, and Butler said that Crane settled down in the mud and he settled down in Crane.

Could any fat-man joke give you a better idea of the jollity and friendliness of the two cronies?

As a hint of Butler's empirical mode of practice in healing it may be said that he had a tender affection for the use of gunpowder, not as an item in a prescription, but as a charge in a pistol. His practice was to keep a brace of loaded implements under a hat on his surgery table, and if he suspected that his patient needed "shocking" into soundness of mind he would

grasp the pistols and discharge them without warning. He often found this a speedy cure for epilepsy !

And to-day ? What happens to-day when a man comes to a doctor with ague ? A long course of injections and medicine of course. But with Doctor Butler it was different. His proud spirit could not have brooked such an irksome course. No postponements for him. John Aubrey, the antiquary and folk-lorist, had given us a sample of his method of curing ague. When Butler occupied a house in London which had a balcony which jutted out over the Thames his treatment for ague was as follows.

A man with a boat was posted beneath the balcony and the patient was ushered in to the Doctor, who engaged him for a few minutes with conversation. Suddenly the Doctor would strike three times on a gong, which was a signal for three lusty serving-men to rush in and throw the patient into the river. If the man in the boat was able to save the patient from being drowned, the Doctor declared that the shock usually cured him.

It is probable that Butler learned from Crane the secret of making his medicinal ale, and it was this innovation which brought the doctor fame. Several licensed houses were opened for the sale of his ale in various parts of London.

To read of Doctor Butler's cures is to be filled with wonders that any of his patients were left alive at all, but somehow he prospered, and became famous all over England. He often returned to Cambridge to see his old friend Crane and on these occasions he would " hire a tavern for their own exclusive use," and

they would lock themselves in and be merry. Butler would doff his court robe and hat, and, throwing them in a corner, say, "There lays that rogue, the King's Physician . . . now we be old friends together."

A convivial picture that ! King's Physicians are not like that in these days ; and perhaps it is as well. But those were spacious days.

In the Guildhall Museum is preserved a sign composed of blue and white Dutch tiles from a hostelry called the "Cock and Bottle." The centre of the sign is occupied with the figures of a fighting cock, and above the bird is a seventeenth-century wine bottle. The date of the sign is about 1700, and it was removed from the "Cock and Bottle" in Cannon Street when it was demolished some years ago. A tavern of the same name still stands on the old site at 94 and 96 Cannon Street on the corner which is joined by Laurence Pountney Hill. A few yards down the hill are two Queen Anne houses with noble doorways, carved jambs, and canopies. The lions' heads on the jambs are finely executed, and in one of the shell-shaped canopies are the figures in relief of two boys playing at marbles. This is the only allusion to the game that has been carved on a London building.

In St. Martin Lane, Cannon Street, is the old "Wine Shades," said to be the oldest wine house in London. No alteration has taken place here since 1663. About twenty years ago I recall it was known as "Sprague's Wine Shades," but the name has now been lost. However, if you ever chance to be near in

Cannon Street do not fail to walk down to this quaint old place of entertainment.

Through a narrow doorway you walk straight into a low-ceilinged room, the light in which is so dim and church-like that you have to grope for a few minutes before your eyes take in the surroundings. The only institution with which the visitors might be able to compare the old "Shades" would be a church. The repose and discreet gloom of the place both encourage the picture, and when the visitor's eye rests on the pews with high backs the illusion is complete. The beadle at the door should have a staff with an ecclesiastical knop and instead of the sign reading "Established in 1663" it should read "This living was restored to the Church of England in the reign of Charles II."

The vestry—er, pardon—the "smoking room" is truly a place for meditation. It is a large, square room furnished with old-fashioned chairs and solid tables, the latter so stained with wine and time that they seem to hold the reflected light of rich port in their shining tops.

As I remember them years ago they were covered with supplies of "churchwarden" pipes for the use of the congregation, but to-day these instruments are not in favour. Churchwardens are no longer supplied, but a gross or more of the veteran pipes are still preserved in a cupboard. A framed verse which was once fixed to the wall of the smoking-room has also vanished. It was placed above the curious old rack, which was made to hold the favourite churchwardens of the regular customers, and read as follows :—

ODE TO A TOBACCO-PIPE

Little tube of mighty power,
Charmer of an idle hour,
Object of my warm desire,
Lip of wax and eye of fire ;
And thy snowy taper waist,
With my finger gently braced ;
And thy pretty swelling crest,
With my little stopper pressed ;
And the sweetest bliss of blisses,
Breathing from thy balmy kisses.
Happy thrice, and thrice again,
Happiest he of happy men ;
Who, when again the night returns,
When again the taper burns,
When again the cricket's gay,
(Little cricket full of play),
Can afford his tube to feed
With the fragrant Indian weed :
Pleasure for a nose divine,
Incense of the god of wine.
Happy thrice, and thrice again,
Happiest he of happy men.

Bell-pulls made of thick, twisted silk-cord are somewhat reminiscent of a belfry as they swing from the four corners of the room. The light filters into the apartment from a large glazed framework above. This is a real smoking-room, not a place with modern slippery settees and horrid mirrors. It is companionable, it is favourable to repose, it is English.

I remember on one Christmas Eve I was asked as a privileged visitor to accompany the rubicund guardian of the vaults down to his lair. Here I noted unmistakable traces of antiquity in the premises. The fortress-like strength of the walls and arches gave you a feeling

of being in some mediæval stronghold, and your eye catches glimpses of beams of black oak, squared enormously. Possibly these were once the ribs of some great vessel which had been broken up on the Thames.

I noticed some of the narrow Tudor bricks in the archways, and tales are told of a bricked-up passage which leads a considerable distance ; some stretch it as far as the river. But for my own part I cannot stretch the passage, nor my imagination, more than a dozen yards.

The bins are in their original state and in them are stored countless bottles of the choicest wines—the very nectar of the gods—and each batch is dated and named.

A tavern which was well known in the nineteenth century was the “Goose and Gridiron” in St. Paul’s Churchyard. It was demolished in 1895 for the extension of the millinery mart which has since monopolized this quarter. Two relics of the tavern may be seen in the Guildhall Museum ; one a wood sign formed of a goose standing on a grid-iron, and the other a sculptured stone bearing a shield inscribed 1786 and surmounted by a bishop’s mitre. Prior to the Great Fire this house was known as the “Mitre,” and the Company of Musicians often gave concerts in the large public hall over the coffee-room. The symbol of the society was a Swan and Harp, and, after some time, this sign was also displayed, an innovation which gave the waggish customers an opening to re-christen the house “The Goose and Gridiron.” One of the rarities of the inn was a skittle-alley on the roof of the house. But perhaps its most noted memory is its

association with Sir Christopher Wren, who here presided over the St. Paul's Freemasons' Lodge for twenty years. The Lodge was strongly represented at the laying of the foundation-stone of St. Paul's Cathedral, and Wren presented the trowel and mallet to them after the ceremony.

Many delightful personal touches in Washington Irving's *Sketch Book* deal with the old London inns, and there is a reference to the "Goose and Gridiron" in his paper on "Little Britain." In writing on the sages and cranks of this fragment of London he refers to a cheesemonger who lived in one of the old mansions, and was as magnificently lodged as a round-bellied mite in the midst of one of his own Cheshires, and proceeds to draw a pen-picture of this oracle :

"His opinion is very much taken in affairs of state, having read the Sunday papers for the last half-century, together with the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Rapin's *History of England*, and the *Naval Chronicle*. His head is stored with invaluable maxims, which have borne the test of time and use for centuries. It is his firm opinion that 'it is a moral impossible,' so long as England is true to herself, that anything can shake her : and he has much to say on the subject of the national debt ; which, somehow or other, he proves to be a great national bulwark and blessing. He passed the greater part of his life in the purlieu of Little Britain, until of late years, when, having become rich and grown into the dignity of a Sunday cane, he begins to take his pleasure and see the world. He has therefore made several excursions to Hampstead, Highgate, and

other neighbouring towns, where he has passed whole afternoons in looking back upon the metropolis through a telescope, and endeavouring to descry the steeple of St. Bartholomew's. Not a stage coachman of Bull and Mouth Street but touches his hat as he passes ; and he is considered quite a patron at the coach office of the ' Goose and Gridiron,' St. Paul's Church-yard. His family have been very urgent for him to make an expedition to Margate, but he has great doubts of these new gimcracks the steamboats, and indeed thinks himself too advanced in life to undertake sea voyages."

Two taverns near the Tower of London merit consideration, the first one, the " Old Ship " in Beer Lane, and the second the " Czar's Head " at 48 Great Tower Street. In the year 1698 Peter the Great came to live near Deptford Dockyard to study the craft of shipbuilding, as we learn from Evelyn's *Diary* :

" The Czar of Muscovy, being come to England, and having a mind to see the building of ships, hir'd my house at Saye's Court, and made it his Court and Palace, new furnished for him by the king."

After having finished his day's work at the Deptford Dockyard the Czar and members of his suite used to resort to a public-house in Great Tower Street, close to Tower Hill, to smoke their pipes, and drink their beer and brandy. The landlord had the Czar of Muscovy's head painted and put up for his sign, which continued till the year 1808, when a person of the name of Waxel took a fancy to the old sign, and offered the then occupier of the house to paint him a new one for

it. A copy was accordingly made from the original, which remained in its position till the house was rebuilt, when the sign was not replaced, and the name only remains.

At No. 94 Great Suffolk Street will be found the odd sign of the "Moon-rakers" tavern.

"The original of this (says Mr. Larwood in his *History of Sign-boards*) may have been one of the stories of the 'Wise Men of Gotham.' A party of them going out one bright night saw the reflection of the moon in the water; and, after due deliberation, decided that it was a green cheese, and so raked for it. Another version is, that some Gothamites, passing in the night over a bridge, saw from the parapet the moon's reflection in the river below, and took it for a green cheese. They held a consultation as to the best means of securing it, when it was resolved that one should hold fast to the parapet whilst the others hung from him hand-in-hand, so as to seize the prize. When they were all in this position, the uppermost, feeling the load heavy, and his hold giving away, called out, 'Hallo! you below, hold tight while I take off my hand to spit on it!' The wise men below replied, 'All right!' upon which he let go his hold, and they all dropped into the water, and were drowned."

From Rotherhithe the Lower Road leads to Deptford and the Royal Victualling Yard. In Thornbury's *Old and New London* we read:

"In former times a narrow pathway, called the 'Halfpenny Hatch,' extended through the meadows and market-gardens from Blue Anchor Road to the

Deptford Lower Road, where it emerged close by an old and much-frequented public-house called the 'China Hall.' The ancient tavern, which was a picturesque building partly surrounded by an external gallery, was pulled down within the last few years, and in its place has been erected a more modern-looking tavern, bearing the same sign. Our old friend Pepys mentions going to China Hall but gives us no further particulars."

"It is not unlikely (says Mr. Larwood in his *History of Sign-boards*) that this was the same place which, in the summer of 1777, was opened as a theatre. Whatever its use in former times, it was at that time the warehouse of a paper manufacturer. In those days the West End often visited the entertainments of the East, and the new theatre was sufficiently patronized to enable the proprietors to venture upon some embellishments. The prices were—boxes, 3s. ; pit, 2s. ; gallery, 1s. ; and the time of commencing varied from half-past six to seven o'clock, according to the season. *The Wonder*, *Love in a Village*, the *Comical Courtship*, and the *Lying Valet* were among the plays performed. The famous Cooke was one of the actors in the season of 1778. In that same year the building suffered the usual fate of all theatres, and was utterly destroyed by fire."

The Halfpenny Hatch was continued beyond the "China Hall," across the fields in the rear, to the "Dog and Duck" Tavern, near the entrance to the Commercial Docks. Anyone patronizing the "China Hall" and partaking of refreshment had the privilege

of passing through the "Halfpenny Hatch" without payment of the halfpenny toll.

With respect to the sign of the "Dog and Duck" we need hardly remark that it refers to a barbarous pastime of our ancestors, when ducks were hunted in a pond by spaniels. The pleasure consisted in seeing the duck make her escape from the dog's mouth by diving. It was much practised in the neighbourhood of London, and particularly in these southern suburbs, till the beginning of this century, when it went out of fashion as most of the ponds were gradually built over.

The China Hall is still standing at No. 141 Lower Road.

In George Yard, Lombard Street, the famous "George and Vulture" Tavern still keeps for us a flavour and mellow charm from the past. In the dead days, when the London private banks balanced monthly, this was a favourite place for supper. I remember the old head cook, who grilled the steaks and chops on a grid in the dining-room, had a very threatening way of saying good night to a customer who left without tipping him. . . . I have seen him follow delinquents into George Yard saying good night with much fervour. The old fellow could call a spade a spade when he had a mind to ; but when he was upset he carried the decimal stop well along and called it an adjective shovel. I have not been in the "George and Vulture" for twenty years, yet, I am informed, it has changed but little.

Readers of Dickens will recall that on the return of Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller from Ipswich, in regard to the breach of promise action of Mrs. Bardwell, they

“took up their present abode in a very good, old-fashioned, and comfortable quarters; to wit, the ‘George and Vulture’ Tavern and Hotel, George Yard, Lombard Street.”

The bill of fare of the tavern will give you full particulars of the Dickens’ associations. Many Americans take these menu-souvenirs back to the States with them. Every Tuesday and Thursday decorous variety to the chop, steak and cheddar is afforded by “Pickwick” pudding.

The part of the building where the bedrooms were situated has been demolished, and a great fire in 1748 destroyed the original tavern.

“The flames spread in three directions at once, and extending into Cornhill, consumed about twenty houses there, including the London Assurance Office, the ‘Fleece’ and the ‘Three-Tuns’ Taverns, and Tom’s and the ‘Rainbow’ Coffee-houses. In Exchange Alley the ‘Swan’ Tavern, with Garraway’s, Jonathan’s, and the ‘Jerusalem’ coffee-houses, were burnt down; and in the contiguous avenues and Birchin Lane, the ‘George and Vulture’ Tavern, with several other coffee-houses, underwent a like fate. Mr. Eldridge, with his wife, children, and servants, all perished in the flames; and Mr. Cooke, a merchant, who lodged in the house, broke his leg in leaping from a window, and died soon after; several other persons were killed by different accidents. All the goods of the sufferers that could be removed were preserved, as well from theft, as from the flames, by the judicious exertions of the City Magistrates, and the assistance

of parties of soldiers sent from the Tower and St. James's."

An inn called the "George and Vulture" has existed in George Yard for over 600 years, and if it be not certain that Shakespeare frequented this house, it is undoubted that two other very famous men did, namely Sir Richard Whittington and Dickens.

Pope's Head Alley which runs from Cornhill to Lombard Street was the cradle of the "Pope's Head," one of London's most celebrated taverns mentioned as far back as the reign of Edward IV. Here, in the reign of Henry VI, wine was sold at a penny a pint, without charge for bread. In 1615, Sir William Craven, father of the first Earl of Craven, left the "Pope's Head" to the Merchant Taylors' Company for charitable purposes, and the Company had in 1849 nine houses on that spot. The first edition of Speed's *Great Britain* (folio, 1611) was sold by John Sudbury and George Humble in Pope's Head Alley at the sign of the "White Horse." This firm, says Cunningham, were the first printsellers established in London. Ben Jonson mentions the pamphlets of Pope's Alley, and Peacham, in his *Complete Gentleman*, alludes to the printsellers. Before the Great Fire the alley was famous for its traders in toys and turners' ware. In Strype's time (thirty years later) it was especially affected by cutlers.

In Thornbury and Walford's *London* there is the following note on this inn :—

"The 'Pope's Head' Tavern was the scene of a fray, in April, 1718, between Quin, the actor, and his fellow-comedian, Bowen. The latter, a hot-

headed Irishman, jealous of Quin's success, sent for him to the 'Pope's Head.' As soon as Quin entered, Bowen, in a transport of envy and rage, planted his back against the door, drew his sword, and bade Quin draw his. Quin in vain remonstrated, but at last drew in his own defence, and tried to disarm his antagonist. Bowen eventually received a mortal wound, of which he died in three days, confessing at last his folly and madness. Quin was tried, and honourably acquitted."

At the Institute of Bankers, No. 5 Bishopsgate, there is a large collection of old English bank notes. Mr. Ernest Sykes, secretary of the Institute, gives the following interesting particulars :—

"Hundreds of banks which sprang up all over the country during the Napoleonic wars eventually failed, and notes issued by them often come to light among the papers of old estates.

"In most cases they are worth in the market about 1s. each. Many are bought by dealers at 2d. or 3d. each, and very often are sold to collectors at 5s. each.

"Among the collection are notes from the earliest Bank of England £1 and £5 issues, a Bank of Scotland note dated 1731 for £12 Scots (£1 sterling), a note for 13 pence Irish (1s. sterling), which was issued in 1804 by a Cork grocer named Denis O'Flynn, and a £5 note issued by the Corporation of Liverpool in 1794.

"Some of the most remarkable are notes for 5s. and 2s. 6d., issued by the Birmingham Workhouse, and other small ones issued by a Wednesbury manufacturer which were 'redeemable in pounds of rod iron.'

“ It was not until 1826 that joint stock banking was permitted. Before that banking was usually carried on by rich traders as a ‘ side line,’ which accounts for the great variety of the notes which have been preserved.”

There are still a few seventeenth- and eighteenth-century carved stone signs to be seen on London houses, but in that last fifty years so many houses have been demolished that it is now a rare thing to find an ancient stone tablet in its original home. Many street tablets have taken shelter in the Guildhall Museum. The “ Ostrich Tablet ” in the Guildhall is an example of an old trader’s sign. It was once, doubtless, placed over a feather shop where the swashbucklers and dandies of other days purchased their ostrich plumes. This sign once stood in Bread Street, for in an old copy of the *Illustrated London News* of December 13th, 1856, there is a drawing of it, where it is called “ The Ostrich, Bread Street.” A Double-headed Eagle sign in the Guildhall is intensely interesting from the fact that it was possibly the sign over the house of John Milton in Bread Street. The date is plainly 1669, which suggests that it is a copy of a sign destroyed in the Great Fire. The double-headed eagle was the coat-of-arms of the Milton family, and this stone might have been copied from one that marked the house of Milton’s grandfather. The letters “ R ” and “ M ” are visible on the sign, and this linked with the fact that there is a passage in Bread Street, which is still known as Black Spread-Eagle Court, seems to point strongly to a Milton association. Holden MacMichael in his *London Signs* says :—

“ There are two possible sources accounting for the sign of the *Black Spread Eagle*. In the first place it occurs in the arms of the Scriveners’ Company (1616), and this circumstance will no doubt account for its association with Milton the poet. For when his grandfather, a zealous Roman Catholic, disinherited his son (Milton’s father) for becoming a Protestant, the latter was obliged to quit his studies at Oxford, and settle in London as a scrivener. And at the *Spread Eagle* in Bread Street, a sign probably adopted by Milton *père* to signify his profession, John Milton was born. Black Spread-Eagle Court seems to have got its name from this sign. Nos. 48 and 59 to No. 63 Bread Street are occupied by one firm who possess on the top floor a bust of the poet, with an inscription stating that the house stands on the site of that which saw Milton’s birth.”

“ A curious old bas-relief (says Peter Cunningham, writing in 1849), not ill-cut, over the entrance to Bull’s Head Court in Newgate Street, preserves the memory of a small giant and a very great dwarf. The quaint effigies of the disproportioned couple represent William Evans, an enormous Welsh porter, at Whitehall, in the service of Charles I, and Sir Geoffrey, or Jeffrey Hudson, the vain but gallant dwarf immortalized by Scott in *Peperil of the Peak*. This bas-relief, Walpole thinks, was probably a shop-sign. Evans, a mammoth-like man, stood seven feet six inches high, while his choleric companion was only three feet nine inches. At a court masque at Whitehall, the porter drew Sir Jeffrey out

of his pocket, to the amazement and amusement of all the ladies of that not too respectable court."

This sculptured sign is still retained on a building at No. 78 Newgate Street, and can be plainly seen by the passer-by.

Edward Wedlake Brayley, in Vol. III of his *Londiniana* (1829) gives some interesting notes on Jeffrey the Dwarf. This celebrated little personage was born in the year 1619, at Okeham, in Rutlandshire. John Hudson, his father, who "kept and ordered the baiting bulls for George, Duke of Buckingham," the then possessor of Burleigh-on-the-Hill, in that county, "was a proper man," says Fuller, "broad-shouldered and chested, though his son never arrived at a full ell in stature." Between the age of seven and nine years he was taken into the service of the Duchess of Buckingham, at Burleigh; where, says Fuller, "he was instantly heightened (not in stature, but in condition), from one degree above rags into silks and satins, and had two tall men to attend him."

The Duchess of Buckingham presented the dwarf to the Queen, and in 1630 he was sent to France to fetch a midwife for her. On his return, he had the misfortune to be taken at sea by a Flemish pirate, who carried him a prisoner to Dunkirk. This event furnished a subject for a short poem, to Sir William D'Avenant, who intituled it *Jeffereidos*, and has described our diminutive hero as engaged in a battle with a turkey-cock, from whose inflated rage he was preserved by the midwife!

The scene is laid at Dunkirk, where, as the satire concludes—



JEFFREY HUDSON, THE SWORD-RATTLING DWARF
(Servant to Queen Henrietta Maria)

Jeffrey strait was thrown when, faint and weak,
The cruel fowl assaults him with his beak.
A lady midwife now he there by chance
Espied, that came along with him from France.
“ A heart brought up in war, that ne’er before
This time could bow,” he said, “ doth now implore
Thou, that *delivered* hast so many, be
So kind of nature as deliver me.”

The Dwarf Hudson was seized as a Papist in 1682 and confined in the Gatehouse Prison, Westminster, where he ended his life, in the sixty-third year of his age.

CHAPTER XI

UNKNOWN BERMONDSEY

THE area which lies beyond Guy's Hospital, and is bounded by Cherry Garden Pier on the river and Long Lane to the south, is the centre of the tanning and leather trades. This section of London, which is little explored by most of our visitors, stands in the suburb of Bermondsey. If we leave the Borough High Street and turn into St. Thomas Street, a turning at Guy's Hospital leads to Maze Pond Terrace and the "Ship and Shovel," which is a noted old hostelry through its long associations with the students of the hospital. The sign may allude to the shovels used in taking out ballast, or cargoes in bulk, or it may refer to the gallant but unfortunate Sir Cloudesley Shovel, whose ship, the *Association*, struck a rock off the Scilly Isles, on the foggy night of October 22nd, 1707, and went down with 800 men on board. Four vessels of his squadron perished with as many as 2,000. Sir Cloudesley Shovel's body was washed up next day and buried in Westminster Abbey.

There is on view at this inn the round table of Guy's Hospital, on which thousands of the students have carved their names or initials. It has been literally hacked away by clasp-knives, and to ensure the venerable relic from collapse the landlord has shored it up with steel

rods. It is a custom for students at the hospital to commemorate the passing of their final examinations by cutting their names on this table, and doctors from all parts of the world return to revive the memory of their student days over a glass of ale at the "Ship and Shovel." In former years, when the inn was a sailors' haunt, the various brands of rum were called after celebrated admirals and generals, and two old brass tap-plates may still be seen bearing the names of Sir Colin Campbell and Sir Cloudesley Shovel. Oddly enough, this inn preserves what now is a very rare thing in London, nothing less than a courtyard with trees and a pigeon-house. The back doorways are very low and picturesque, and dark, mysterious stairs lead down to cavernous cellars.

In Maze Pond Terrace is an old building bearing a tablet inscribed :

ST. THOMAS'S CHARITY-SCHOOL

1781.

This house has now been purchased by the Southwark Borough Council and will be converted into flats. The wrought-iron bracket holding the school bell still remains, and must be well over a hundred years old. Thornbury, in *Old and New London*, mentions that the Abbot of Battle had a fine residence near this Terrace, with well-laid-out gardens, as an agreeable change from the natural beauties of hilly, leafy Sussex, adorned with parterres in Norman fashion, with a fish-pond and a curiously-contrived maze. The abbot has gone, and the palace and gardens are gone too ; and Londoners of the nineteenth century hurry through Maze

Pond, at the back of Guy's Hospital, little thinking whence the dirty street derived its name. The "Maze"—now an assemblage of small streets on the south side of the London Bridge Railway Station—is stated by Mr. Charles Knight in his *London* to have "once been the garden attached to the manor-house, or 'inn,' of the abbots of Battle, the house itself having stood on the north side of Tooley Street, in what is now called Mill Lane, which leads down to Battle-bridge Stairs." Aubrey, in his *Anecdotes and Traditions*, says, "At Southwark was a maze, which is now converted into buildings bearing that name"; but Peter Cunningham, in his *Handbook of London*, says that the Maze Pond is so called from the 'Manor of Maze,' which formerly existed here."

From Great Maze Pond we may pass through Kipling Street to Long Lane, where there are several picturesque inns. The "Simon the Tanner" is at No. 231, and is notable both for its age and the unique sign. The house is, of course, a rendezvous for tanners and leather-dressers, and the sign makes allusion to the tanner of Jaffa (Joppa) of whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles as having St. Peter as a guest. Long Lane leads into Bermondsey Square, which still retains the undisturbed look of a marketplace in some country town.

The only thing which really hurts the eye here is a hideous petrol service station. A stone with an incised cross, a relic of Bermondsey Abbey, has been preserved in the wall of this service depot. In the square is the "White Bear" Inn, with a fine sculptured Bear sign built into the front wall. The sign is worthy

to compare with the Old White Bear to be seen in the wall at 6 Lower Thames Street.

The old "Star and Garter" in Bermondsey Street was the forerunner of the Star Music Hall, which is still running its variety shows. "The Star" in the old days was not a very select music hall; indeed, it is not over pretentious to-day. The overworked people of Bermondsey require "violent delights." Their pleasures must be boisterous. They have few pleasures of the soul.

An amateur night at the Star about thirty years ago afforded a good illustration of the way in which the lower class of work-folk loved to amuse themselves. An amateur night, it may be explained, was given over to singing and dancing competitions, in which the local youths and girls performed in the hopes of winning small money prizes. You may imagine that some of the turns made a sorry spectacle, and that many of them were reduced to a few incoherent gurgles, when they faced the pack of gallery-boys, gesticulating, shouting, and hanging over the rails. I remember seeing a mawkish factory-girl breaking down in the middle of her song. It was a golden opportunity, dear to the hearts of the gallery-boys. They shouted and bawled at the unfortunate girl to "pop off," and "put an orange in it," but she stood hypnotized in the middle of the stage, mouth open, and eyes fixed in bewilderment. The stage manager shouted to her to come off. She still remained motionless. Then the gallery-boys produced pea-shooters, and dismissed her with a veritable fusillade.

Most of the amateur turns were not allowed to

proceed farther than the first two lines of their songs, the management cutting their efforts short by dropping the curtain with a run.

At the corner of Jamaica Road is the "Prince Teck" Inn. At the other corners stand Christ Church, a pawn shop, and the Drill Hall. Local wits will tell you that here a man may get married, intoxicated, and sober again in the morning, and after spending his money may pawn his clothes and join the Army in the afternoon.

We now walk along Abbey Street, up George Row, passing Hickman's Folly, and turn up Jacob Street, which still has that sinister and desolate air which reminds us of Dickens's description of the spot in *Oliver Twist*. Two of the very ancient houses of Jacob's Island still stand in this street, and "Stave Porters" Inn deserves attention. Several streams and watercourses once intersected this district, and upon the south bank of one of these, between Mill Street and George Row, stood a row of curious wooden houses built upon piles.

Thus does Dickens describe this neighbourhood :

"A stranger, standing on one of the wooden bridges across this ditch in Mill Street, will see the inhabitants of the houses on either side lowering, from their back doors and windows, buckets, pails, and domestic utensils in which to haul the water up ; and when his eye is turned from these operations to the houses themselves his utmost astonishment will be excited by the scene before him. Crazy wooden galleries, common to the backs of half a dozen houses, with holes from whence to look on

the slime beneath ; windows, broken and patched, with poles thrust out on which to dry the linen that is never there ; rooms so small, so filthy, so confined, that the air would seem too tainted even for the dirt and squalor which they shelter ; wooden chambers thrusting themselves out above the mud, and threatening to fall into it, as some of them have done ; dirt-besmeared walls and decaying foundations—all these ornament the banks of Folly Ditch.”

Two of the narrow passages near here are known by the humble names of Halfpenny Alley and Farthing Alley. At the corner where the former joins Wolseley Street is the “ Ship Aground ” Inn.

The Folly Ditch has been filled in for many years, but there are old inhabitants of Bermondsey who can remember rowing boats along streams where now stand shops and warehouses.

“ The history of Folly Ditch (says Charles Knight in his *London*) is connected in a remarkable way with the manufacturing features of Bermondsey. When the abbey was at the height of its glory, and formed a nucleus to which all else in the neighbourhood was subordinate, the supply of water for its inmates was obtained from the Thames through the medium of this tide. Bermondsey was probably at one time very little better than a morass, the whole being low and level ; indeed, at the present time, manufacturers in that locality find the utmost difficulty in obtaining a firm foundation for their buildings, such is the spongy nature of the ground. In the early period just alluded to, the spot, besides being low,

was almost entirely unencumbered with buildings ; and thus a channel from the Thames, although not many feet in depth, was filled throughout the entire district at every high tide. There was a mill at the river-side, at which the corn for the granary of the abbey was ground ; and the mill was turned by the flux and reflux of the water along the channel. When the abbey was destroyed, and the ground passed into the possession of others, the houses which were built on the site still received a supply of water from this watercourse. In process of time tanneries were established on the spot, most probably on account of the valuable supply of fresh water obtainable every twelve hours from the river. This seems to be an opinion entertained by many of the principal manufacturers of the place."

A little way down Shad Thames one reaches the "Ship Inn," whose dim, cabin-like rooms, uneven floors, and time-worn shutters at the large front windows are just the features one would have given to a riverside hostelry. There is a nautical flavour about this inn which culminates when the dock is full of shipping and the hard-handed, broad-backed sailors are lounging about the tables and settees. Mrs. Owers, the proprietress, has lived at "The Ship" for fifty years, and I may say that her house is a perfect oasis of cleanliness and order in the midst of dirt and squalor of the surrounding wharves and crowded passages. The benches, tables, and floor are scrubbed to such a perfect condition of whiteness that one might think they have been bleached with acid ; the windows smile before crisp white curtains ; the grates

shine with the authentic mixture of blacklead and elbow-grease. Every door-knob and brass tap is bur-nished to the highest pitch. The yard of the " Ship " is picturesque and surprisingly large for such a small inn. A covered walk connects the saloon with an old-fashioned kitchen built on the opposite side of the yard, and if you peep in you will see kitchen utensils, bright and shining, ranged against the wall, brass candlesticks, and deep blue cups and plates.

When I walked into the yard with Mrs. Owers a big, woolly dog, of such a breed as I have never seen before or since, jumped on his legs and threatened me with a thousand imprecations if I dared to lay a finger on any of the property under his charge. An old leaden pump dripped on the cobblestones. In one corner of the yard I noticed a smallish stable with two stalls. This is somewhat of a puzzle to the landlady, for there is no means of getting horses in or out of the yard. I suggested that the stable had been so long in existence that new buildings had blocked up the original entrance at the back. However tempting, this was a snap judgment ; and in making it I went astray and wandered wide of the truth for some time, until I picked up a copy of *The Uncommercial Traveller* by Charles Dickens. I then easily learned the solution.

Fifty years ago donkeys were very largely used in this district by costermongers, who sold sprats, shrimps, periwinkles, and mussels, and the animals were usually trotted to their stables *through the street doors*. It is a curious thing that Dickens should refer to this very neighbourhood. He writes :

" I know shy neighbourhoods where the Donkey

goes in at the street door, and appears to live upstairs, for I have examined the back-yard from over the palings, and have been unable to make him out. Gentility, nobility, Royalty, would appeal to that donkey in vain to do what he does for a costermonger. Feed him with oats at the highest price, put an infant prince and princess in a pair of panniers on his back, adjust his delicate trappings to a nicety, take him to the softest slopes at Windsor, and try what pace you can get out of him. Then starve him, harness him anyhow to a truck with a flat tray on it, and see him bowl from Whitechapel to Bayswater. There appears to be no particular private understanding between birds and donkeys, in a state of nature ; but in the shy neighbourhood state, you shall see them always in the same hands and always developing their very best energies for the very worst company. I have known a donkey—by sight ; we were not on speaking terms—who lived on the Surrey side of London Bridge, among the fastnesses of Jacob's Island and Dockhead. It was the habit of that animal, when his services were not in immediate requisition, to go out alone, idling. I have met him a mile from his place of residence, loitering about the streets ; and expression of his countenance at such times was most degraded. He was attached to the establishment of an elderly lady who sold periwinkles, and he used to stand on Saturday nights with a cartful of those delicacies outside a gin-shop, pricking up his ears when a customer came to the cart, and too evidently deriving satisfaction from the knowledge that they got

bad measure. His mistress was sometimes overtaken by inebriety. The last time I ever saw him (about five years ago) he was in circumstances of difficulty, caused by this failing. Having been left alone with the cart of periwinkles, and forgotten, he went off idling. He prowled among his usual low haunts for some time, gratifying his depraved tastes, until, not taking the cart into his calculations, he endeavoured to turn up a narrow alley, and became greatly involved. He was taken into custody by the police, and, the Green Yard of the district being near at hand, was backed into that place of durance. At that crisis, I encountered him; the stubborn sense he evinced of being—not to compromise the expression—a blackguard, I never saw exceeded in the human subject.”

The stretch of Shad Thames which faces the river is connected with the margin of the water by three flights of stone steps : George’s Stairs, Horseleydown New Stairs and Horseleydown Old Stairs. On descending the river steps at this point a fine spectacle of the Thames bursts into view, with the Tower Bridge above, and here and there masts or giant cranes breaking the sky-line beyond them.

The river at this point teems with life. Not a moment passes throughout the hours of daylight that some craft or other—whether barge, torpedo boat, excursion steamer, yacht or trading schooner, barque, brigantine, or rust-red collier—is entering or leaving docks. . . . It is one of those spots that gives one a vivid impression of the nation’s tireless activity and maritime greatness.

From time immemorial Bermondsey has been the centre of the tanning and leather trades, and from all quarters the breeze bears faint reminiscences of ox-hides and sheepskins upon its wings. The faint, sweet, sickly reek that one has been taught to consider specially deadly is looked upon as a kind of friendly and enchanted odour in Bermondsey. The natives will tell you that when the Great Plague raged in London, many of the terror-stricken people fled to the Bermondsey tan-pits, because it was noticed that the men who worked at them seemed to be immune from the contagion of this affliction. It is said that there are strong medical virtues in the nauseous smell of the fellmongers' yards.

“A circle one mile in diameter, having its centre at the spot where the abbey once stood (says Charles Knight, in his *London*) will include within its limits most of the tanners, the curriers, the fellmongers, the woolstaplers, the leather-factors, the leather-dressers, the leather-dyers, the parchment-makers, and the glue-makers, for which this district is so remarkable.”

There is scarcely a street, a road, a lane, into which we can turn without seeing evidences of one or other of these occupations. One narrow road—leading from the Grange Road to the Kent Road—is particularly distinguishable for the number of leather-factories which it exhibits on either side ; some time-worn and mean, others newly and skilfully erected. Another street, known as Long Lane, and lying westward of the church, exhibits nearly twenty distinct establishments where skins or hides undergo some of

the many processes to which they are subjected.

The Skin Market stands in the heart of Bermondsey, between Western Street and Bermondsey Street, and it has changed but little since the days of William IV when it was built. There is a curious little inn called "The Fleece" tucked into one corner of its walls.

In the market warehouses is transacted the business of the leather-factors, who sell to the curriers or leather-sellers leather which has come through the process of the tanners ; these salesmen are the middlemen in the traffic of leather, just as the skin-sellers are in the traffic of skins. The Skin Market is an oblong yard terminated by semicircular ends, it is pitched with old-fashioned cobblestones in the middle, and flagged round with a broad foot-pavement.

As a shelter to keep off the rain the pavement is covered through its whole extent with an arcade supported by pillars, and the portion of pavement included between every two contiguous pillars is called a " bay." There are about fifty of these " bays," which are let out to skin-salesmen ; and on the pavement of his bay the salesman exposes the skins which he is commissioned to sell. Here on market-days may be seen a busy scene of traffic between the salesmen on the one hand and the fellmongers on the other. The carts, laden with sheepskins, come rattling into the place, and draw up in the roadway of the depository ; the loads are taken out, and ranged on the pavement of the bays ; the sellers and buyers make their bargains ; the purchase-money is paid into the hands of the salesman, and by him transmitted to the butcher ; and

the hides or skins are removed to the yards of the buyers.

The skins pass into the hands of the fellmongers with the wool on, just as they are taken from the animals. The first part of the fellmonger's process takes place in a Washing Yard where the skins are washed and placed in stone cisterns filled with pure water. The skins are left in the tanks for a day or so, and then taken out and painted with lime. They are next taken to the "Sweating Room," where they are suspended by their ears to dry. The next step in the process is the Pulling Shop. Here the wool is pulled from the skins and sorted into a dozen grades and qualities. The bare skins are taken from here and pickled in lime pits for two weeks and then passed to the "Fleshing Shop."

The "flesher" stands behind a kind of small wooden pulpit called a "beam." The sheepskin is stretched over the beam, and the "flesher" takes a long two-handled knife and scrapes all the flesh away from the pelt. The skin is also trimmed of its ragged edges and the flesh and scraps are collected and sent away to contribute largely in the manufacture of glue, gelatine, and margarine.

On the face of the Hide and Wool Exchange will be seen a set of sculptured stones which exhibit the various labours of the fellmonger. The warehouses of Bermondsey sent thousands of sheepskins out to our troops in the trenches during the Great War, and many of us remember gratefully the warmth, comfort, and soft crispness of those modern "tabards."

After the flesher has scraped the skins they are split into sections: the "mutton side" produces parchment and chamois leather, and the "wool side" gives skivers, which are thin pieces of leather used for lining hats, boot-making and a thousand other things. The "basils"—whole skins—are used for ladies' Russian boots, motor-coats and arm-chairs, to name only a few uses.

At the Borough of Bermondsey Public Library (near the entrance to the Rotherhithe Tunnel) many specimens of leather articles made in Bermondsey are exhibited; also a series of photographs, showing all the operations in the manufacture of leather. These photographs taken at Neckinger Mills about sixty years ago, are exceptionally interesting, as they show the bewhiskered and top-hatted leather merchants, and the slippered and smoking-capped workmen of the prim and peaceful days when Bermondsey was almost a rural village.

Near the Church of St. Mary Magdalen is the ancient "King's Arms and Hand" Inn, with the remains of a coach-yard. You enter the saloon through a vaulted passage, above which is a queer little balcony window. The massive wooden gate, with wicket for use when the coaches were locked in for the night, still remains in its original position at the front arch.

In the register of Bermondsey Old Church is a curious vow, headed, "The forme of a solemn vowe made betwixt a man and his wife, having been long absent, through which occasion the woman being married to another man the [husband] took her again as followeth:—

THE MAN'S SPEECH

“ Elizabeth, my beloved wife, I am righte sorie that I have so long absented myself from thee, whereby thou shouldest be occasioned to take another man to be thy husband. Therefore I do now vowe and promise, in the sight of God and this company, to take thee again as my owne, and will not onlie forgive thee but live with thee, and do all other duties to thee, as I promised at our marriage.”

THE WOMAN'S SPEECH

“ Raphe, my beloved husband, I am righte sorie that I have in thy absence taken another man to be my husband ; but here before God and this companie, I do renounce and forsake him ; I do promise to keep myself only to thee duringe life, and to perform all the duties which I first promised to thee in our marriage.”

Then follows a short prayer, suited to the occasion, and the entry thus concludes :

“ The 1st day of August, 1604, Raphe Goodchild, of the parish of Barkinge, in Thames Street, and Elizabeth his wife were agreed to live together, and thereupon gave their hands one to another, making either of them solemn vow so to do in the presence of us, William Steres, *Parson* ; Edward Coker ; and Richard Eyres, *Clerk*.”

Bermondsey Book Shop in Bermondsey Street was formerly the “ Eight Bells ” Inn, and the landlord was the well-known pugilist, Tom Causer. In the neighbourhood of Decima Street and Tay Buildings are to

be seen some of the curious little wooden houses, which in Bermondsey are packed away in so small a compass. "The Ship" in Long Lane was among the earliest inns in Bermondsey. The back entrance leads out to Victoria Place, which once bore an evil reputation as the resort of smugglers, thieves, and beggars. This court is still full of crazy and squalid cottages.

CHAPTER XII

THE PAPER-MARBLER'S CRAFT

AS I entered Mr. Huttly's studio in New Yard, Great Queen Street, the afternoon sun fell full upon the windows, sending searching fingers of light on a hundred curious stoneware vessels ranged about several long slate tanks. Sheets of paper were hanging on racks all around the room—paper slashed with zigzag lines and patterns of every imaginable colour and design. Double-elephant sheets jazzed with long wavy streaks of red and blue . . . reams of printer's paper behaved as if they had suddenly developed some frightful malady and had broken out into strange eruptions. But, however remarkable the contents of the room, the white-aproned, bare-armed craftsman who stood beside the slate baths speedily attracted my attention from the latest batch of his jazz paper to himself. I thought he looked like some old alchemist along the pots and crucibles of a forgotten age.

I asked him about his craft.

"Ah! It was very ancient," said Mr. Huttly. "The Japanese and the Persians, were the great artists in 'marbled' papers. When you see in a catalogue of rare books an item with marbled end-papers it will at once call to mind some of those old books dated about

1820, with fly-leaves stained with variegated colours. I think I am the only man in London who makes this marbled paper."

To-day the practice of decorating books with marbled end-papers and leaf-edges has fallen out of fashion . . . it is an extra expense which publishers think is not worth while. However, the English Banks still cling to marbled decorations in their account books, and Mr. Huttly receives regular orders for sheets of marbled paper from commercial printers and bookbinders. The British Museum also employ Mr. Huttly as their book-marbler.

There are no secrets about the ingredients and methods employed in making marbled paper, but when you come to try your hand at it you will find it a tricky job.

"Now let me instruct you in the art," said Mr. Huttly. "The large shallow bath which looks like an old-fashioned sink contains a liquid made from gum tragacanth and water. This gum is a special Persian variety used in pharmacy and calico-printing. These large jars contain water-colours mixed ready for use with ox-gall. I take a sprinkling brush and dip into one of the jars, and then proceed to shake the colour on the surface of the solution in the bath. Notice how the colour floats on the top of the bath and spreads into wavy patterns ; the ox-gall in the colour makes it float like oil. You see I can take other brushes of colour and sprinkle one over the other in various colours. The next step is to comb the floating colours into patterns. For this I use combs with many teeth and combs with only a few teeth."

Mr. Huttly took a comb and moved it to and fro through the floating colours.

"The bath is now ready to print the marbled paper," he continued, taking up a sheet of white paper and laying it on the surface of the bath.

Then, hey presto ! he pulled the sheet back sharply and off it came with a brilliant pattern painted all over it. The astonishing point is that no two sheets of marbled paper can be exactly alike for the bath has to be dressed anew for each printing. A skilled marbler can sprinkle and comb the colours so that each sheet produced is *almost* similar ; but all the same no two sheets can be identical.

Book-edges are "marbled" by dipping them into the surface of the bath ; this requires a steady hand and exact judgment. Four or five hundred pages are gripped firmly and plunged on the surface with a zigzag movement to get the wavy pattern.

Mr. Huttly thinks the healthful balm of the seaside and the country is very much exaggerated.

"For peace, health, and amusement, give me Drury Lane," said Mr. Huttly. "I have lived here for eighty-seven years, and still feel as young and sprightly as my boy downstairs."

I must inform the reader that Mr. Huttly's son is sixty-three and just beginning to pick up one or two wrinkles in the art of paper marbling.

Over eighty-seven years in the heart of Drury Lane ! A long, long time. Over seventy years working at his quaint craft in this very court. Mr. Huttly has not seen the world in its roundness, it is true, but he has seen London in its minuteness.

Mr. Huttly has lived for a long time, but he does not give one the sense of being old. He seems to me as far from age as he is from youth. His face is at once shrewd and kindly—the face of a man who thoroughly understands human nature. Perhaps his voice has a sad note in it. It is a voice with the sound of the past in it. When he tells me that there was no Shaftesbury Avenue and no Charing Cross Road when he was a boy his voice seems very far away, but when he tells me he saw the funeral of the Duke of Wellington pass down the Strand with the coffin high on a magnificent funeral chariot, I feel that I have not yet emerged from babyhood.

CHAPTER XIII

THE VILLAGE OF BELGRAVIA

LET the visitor in search of the curious turn, as the writer did the other day, out of the bustling, up-to-date Victoria Station into the quiet seclusion of Eaton Square, and at the back of St. Peter's Church he will find a small settlement of ancient houses which will come upon him like a breath from the last century. It is the Village of Belgravia . . . a village in miniature. It has miniature shops with miniature rooms and miniature inns with miniature bars. The courts and alleys are narrow and the doorways are diminutive. Many years ago these byways and blind-alleys were the stables and quarters of the grooms, footmen, butlers, and camp-followers of the wealthy and noble folk quartered in the patrician area whose boundaries stretch from Lower Belgrave Street to Knightsbridge. To-day the rambling coach-houses and stables have been converted into flats, studios, and garages.

At the end of Little Chester Street stands "The Talbot." No electric light and flaunting plate-glass windows showing a brilliant interior here, but simply a smoke-begrimed, time-stained building, which might be an inn in some old-world country town. Passing up a flight of stone steps outside—steps worn hollow by the tread of innumerable feet—you enter and find yourself in a low-ceilinged bar, which has an atmos-

phere of discreet gloom. Through a low doorway at the side of the bar is a singular apartment furnished with wooden pens and tables, and here at midday the chauffeurs of Belgravia come to lunch and quaff a pint of ale. This appears to be reserved for customers who bring their own eatables. But the bar and smoking-room is only a part of the establishment, and that not the most interesting. Groping your way across the sawdusted floors and passing out of the bar at the back you find yourself in a small courtyard as curious as any it has been your lot to set foot in. Above you is a queer little tier of bedrooms with a gallery and wooden balustrades which is almost a small-scale reproduction of the gallery of the quaint old "George" Inn in the Borough. The rooms are furnished with old-fashioned benches and tables and are the headquarters of a distinct clientèle. At lunch time if you drop in you will find frequenters as venerable as the benches on which they are sitting. These customers are the "regulars" who partake of the "Talbot" table d'hôte.

A covered shed in the toy of a courtyard is the club house of the Belgravia Timber Club, which is one of the oldest skittle clubs in London. The skittle alley is about sixty feet in length, and the player trundles a wooden missile shaped like a flat cheese about twelve pounds in weight and tries to knock down the whole of the skittles in as few throws as possible. I noticed that the carefully constructed alley at the "Talbot" had been cushioned with old motor-car tyres by the postilions of mechanical travel, a trifle which introduced a new note into this ancient game.

Little Chester Street is the heart of Belgravia Village, and here there are little shops withdrawn from public curiosity where servants' perquisites are disposed of. The cook may sell her surplus dripping and fat at these retiring and convenient trade centres ; the butler may sell bottles and discarded bric-à-brac ; the chauffeur may sell partly worn motor-car tyres ; the valet and housekeeper may sell second-hand shoes and clothes.

" The Nottingham Castle " is another small tavern in Little Chester Street which is altogether well worth seeing. It caters for the male servants of Belgravia, and in a small dining-room at the back a club meets whose members are footmen, butlers, valets and chauffeurs. It is no uncommon thing to see a line of luxurious motor-cars waiting outside this humble inn.

In the adjacent Chapel Mews is the " Horse and Groom " which was re-built about fifty years ago, after the original house had been destroyed by fire. It is said that the old inn was once a farmhouse with a large duck-pond before it.

If we thread the passage by the side of the Alexandra Hotel in Knightsbridge we shall find the Iron Duke still with us, for this alley takes us by a zigzag course to the old Barrack Yard and the Duke of Wellington's Mews. The arched entrance to the Barrack Yard with the guard-room above it still remains in its original state. If we pass by Phillip's Terrace to Wilton Terrace Mews we shall find the old " Grenadier Inn." It is a quaint inn with a stone-flagged forecourt, and stone steps leading up to the doorway. The benches

inside are well-worn and polished. The great curiosity of this house is the drinking cup from which the Iron Duke quaffed his morning ale. When the landlord produced it for my inspection I was disappointed. Indeed, I was more than disappointed. I was incredulous. The drinking-cup was an innocent-looking, terra-cotta jug with a spout which was ill-adapted for the operation of quaffing ale. I could not see the great Duke in all his glory of scarlet and gold risking a drink from a jug which might have dribbled drops of ale over his tunic and rainbow row of medals and stars. No ! I simply could not swallow that tale. I called for a pint of ale in a tankard, for that is the way, I felt sure, that the Duke would have met the situation.

Let us go a few steps farther. Outside the " Grenadier " is Wilton Place, and here we may note steps and a doorway in the wall of St. Paul's Churchyard. The door is now closed, but a few years ago the public were allowed to use this as a cut to Knightsbridge. The stone steps near Phillips Terrace is said to be the Duke of Wellington's " jossing block," and I believe it is an actual fact that his chargers and other horses were stabled in the adjacent mews.

In 1722 Shepherd Market (often incorrectly spoken of as Shepherd's Market) was a patch of unenclosed waste land which in former times had been used as a fairground. Edward I granted to the Leper Hospital in this parish " the profit of a Fair to last from the Eve of St. James (1st May), the day and the morrow and four following days." The area of this Fair covered the fields upon which the present Mayfair district stands, and it was held yearly up to the reign

of George III. In 1735 Edward Shepherd built Shepherd Market as a permanent extension of the Fair. It was perhaps one of the earliest attempts at building a Kursaal, theatre, and market house combined ; the lower portion of the building being used for shops and taverns and the upper portion containing a theatre. One of the inns in the Market had an evil reputation for "retaining and relieving of bad fellows," and it was said that the innkeeper acted in collusion with highwaymen who made the fields of Mayfair such a terror. They shared the spoils, and mine host was able, not only to shelter those who held up coaches and single travellers, but also to keep them well informed on the movement of travellers who were likely to carry sums of money. The original "Running Horse" in Market Street is said to have given hospitality to gentlemen of the road during the eighteenth century. Many of the present buildings in Shepherd Market are not more than eighty years old, for the original shops were demolished about 1860. The roar of London comes mellowed to the little market place through a covered way which leads under some shops at No. 42 Curzon Street. This quaint backwater will charm you in every way, for the rough paving of the slab-stones, cavernous shops, narrow courts, and crooked eaves are satisfying to the eye which appreciates an old-world atmosphere.

At No. 16 Curzon Street is an old link-extinguisher, and passing across to Waverton Street we come to the "Red Lion," and old inn with a vaulted passage by the side, leading to Red Lion Yard. Few Londoners could direct you to this inn. If we walk through the

adjacent Hay's Mews we shall pass No. 6 John Street which is now a private residence. The house was once the Berkeley Arms, and the building dates back to 1650. It still retains a very picturesque air, and the red tiles and green jalousies are a great ornament.

In Farm Street is the "Punch Bowl" with queer inglenooks and wooden partitions.

In Charles Street is the "Running Footman." This curious sign refers to the original function of a footman, namely, to run alongside his master's carriage. Upon the sign-board is represented a tall, agile man in an attire which might be the stage dress for a "leading boy" in a "Robin Hood" pantomime. The cap is red and decorated with a pheasant's feather; the coat is green and gold, and he carries a stick having a metal ball at top; he is engaged in running and underneath are the words, "I am the only running footman."

Chambers tells us in his *Book of Days* that the custom of keeping running footmen survived to such recent times that Sir Walter Scott remembered seeing the state-coach of John, Earl of Hopetoun, attended by one of the fraternity, "clothed in white, and bearing a staff." It is believed that the Duke of Queensberry—the "Old Q." who died in 1810, kept up the practice longer than any other of the London grandees; and Mr. Thoms tells an amusing anecdote of a man who came to be hired for the duty by that ancient but far from venerable peer. The duke was in the habit of trying the pace of candidates for his service by seeing how they could run up and down Piccadilly, watching and timing them from his balcony. They put on a livery before the trial. On one occasion, a candidate



TAVERN SIGN IN CHARLES STREET, BERKELEY SQUARE

presented himself, dressed, and ran. At the conclusion of his performance he stood before the balcony.

“You will do very well for me,” said the duke.

“And your livery will do very well for me,” replied the man, and gave the duke a last proof of his ability as a runner by then running away with it.

CHAPTER XIV

ORANGE GROVES IN ORANGE STREET

IT was a cloudless October evening settling down through purple into pure silver around the roofs and chimneys of Whitcomb Street. As I passed the "Blackamoor's Head" the fine old carved façade looked black and sharp and dramatic. In the deep shadows the electric lights of the small shops gleamed brightly, and before them, darkling outlined like a moth fluttering about a candle flame, passed to and fro a slim girl beautifully shod in gilded leather shoes. She wore a crafty little hat pulled down over one eye, which charmingly introduced one, willy-nilly, to an alluring red little mouth. She frowned as she fluttered to and fro; she was agitated . . . nervous. . . . In her dark eyes there lurked a look of terror. Here was one of London's mysteries which held some promise of a thrill. I wondered as I gazed at her frozen face whether she was waiting for a lover or a packet of cocaine. Perhaps she was a slinky girl-crook or perhaps she was a programme-seller at the Comedy. I wondered.

Suddenly a man stepped from one of the small shops and overtook the girl. That was an electric moment. He looked furtively over his shoulder; first one way and then the other, and produced from a deep pocket

a mysterious package. The night frowned and the stars looked down in cold silence.

Adventurers ?

Crooks ?

I wondered.

“ Well, did you get it ? ” asked the girl, clutching his arm with a sharp, nervy movement.

“ Yes, yes,” the man answered. His voice quivered with excitement. “ I was just in time to get two middle bits of fried cod.”

Psyche of the silk stockings and powdered nose took the packet of hot fried fish from Tomeo, and with linked arms they faded into the pearl-pale fog a hundred yards ahead.

* * * *

The Blackamoor's Head is a very uncommon sign, and you may walk all over the town without seeing another. No. 8 Whitcomb Street is the only instance as a tavern sign which survives in London. J. Holden MacMichael, in *The London Signs and their Associations*, says :

“ There were two kinds of Moors with which the white races of Europe who had dealings with them were familiar. These were the ‘ Tanny ’ or ‘ Tawny ’ Moor, and his sable brother the ‘ Black ’ (a) Moor ; hence, I think, the two divisions of what we shall soon be unable to speak of as the ‘ Dark Continent ’—i.e., Mauritia, or the country of the Moors, and Nigritia, the country of the Blacks. But we in this country, being more familiar with the blackamoor as a slave, and as one engaged so

extensively in the important commercial enterprises of the American colonies, adopted his ebony presentment on the sign-board, where the 'Tanny' Moor, in spite of frequent allusions to him in the newspapers of the time, was unknown."

Forty shillings reward was offered for the return of a lost "tannymoor" in the *Daily Advertiser*, February 9th, 1742 :

"A tannymore, with short bushy hair, very well shaped, in a grey livery, lined with yellow, about seventeen or eighteen years of age, with a silver collar about his neck, with these directions, Captain George Hastings' boy, Brigadier in the King's Horse Guards. Whoever brings him to the 'Sugar Loaf' in the Pall Mall shall have 40s. reward."

No. 17 Orange Street, Leicester Square, stands in Elf-land. It is the strangest little shop in London, for here, between these sad-looking houses and under a bluish-grey fog which always seems to hang above them, the proprietor sits surrounded with produce from all the ends of the earth, from strange seas that we have never sailed and strange forests that we could not even picture. The shop window looks like a case in the Marine section of the South Kensington Museum of Natural History. There are smoked eels, tunny fish, Chinese bird nests, frogs' legs, snails, sharks' fins, kangaroos' tails and cocks' combs. Yet there are people who pass this shop every day without feeling the faint touch of romance tugging at their hearts! They see no witchery in those packets of Russian Caravan Tea; in those strange Indian Pickles; in those tins of Bombay Ducks. They think the

foreign produce dealer is commonplace. They think him a normal tradesman. By all that's wonderful, the wind of romance that sows romance and madness and whispers of the unknown blows from all the seven seas into this little shop in Orange Street. I cannot look at sliced mango chutney and Japanese seaweed in that window without thinking of orange groves and palm-tufted islets set in black shadowy seas of brine-kissed decks which heave and creek beneath the feet ; I cannot look at bottles of ginger without thinking of long and golden noontides in secret villages of the Empire of the Dragon. . . .

I entered. A short, dark man was sitting in a small inner office.

"Can I get you anything ?" he asked.

"Let me see," I said in a friendly but vague manner.

"Let me have some Chinese bird nests."

"One pound, thirty shillings; or two pounds a dozen ?" said the proprietor genially.

"But," said I, somewhat disturbed, "you do not mean to tell me seriously that you actually sell Chinese bird nests. I really thought they were displayed in your window merely as curios."

"Sell them !" said the proprietor warmly. "Of course we sell them."

"But there can be but little sale for such an unpleasant-looking food. It must taste horrid."

"Not at all. I have many people from the large West End houses who buy them. The Chinese are connoisseurs of dainty food. They excel in cooking, as they excel at everything else. Do not forget that they made paper, ink, and print a thousand years

before we did ; do not forget that they travelled by a compass twenty-five hundred years before our Christ. They excel in dyes, in sugar, in porcelain, in gunpowder, in working metals, in silk, in cotton, carved ivory and lacquer-work. Do you think that such people would be likely to choose coarse and unpalatable food ? ”

“ May I ask what those curious, black spiky, objects in bottles are used for ? ” I questioned.

“ Those,” said the proprietor, “ are sea-slugs used for making trepang soup. The trepang or *bêche-de-mer* is much esteemed by the Chinese as a food delicacy. The ordinary kind resembles a prickly cucumber ; but they vary in colour when dried, being black, white, or red. There are no less than thirty-three different varieties enumerated by Chinese traders. It is gutted, boiled, split open, and smoke-dried. The average size is about eight inches long, but some are found two feet in length. The sea-slug is banned by Buddah, but it is only in China that it is appreciated as a food-substance and as an aphrodisiac. The imports of trepang to England are traded to the Chinese lodging houses at Limehouse.”

Much strange information I gathered from the proprietor ; many more facts than I shall ever be able to use during the rest of my life. Life leads one into some queer unexpected corners, and this little shop with its oils, peppers, and produce from every corner of the earth strikes a unique keynote.

CHAPTER XV

NOOKS AND CORNERS OF SOHO

THE wreckers are at work in London everywhere you turn. Labourers arrive with mauls and crowbars. Scaffolding is thrown up. The sidewalk is boarded off. Picks swing from brawny shoulders. A warning cry comes from an upper story and half a ton of plaster, stone-dust and rubble come rattling down through the half-demolished flooring.

Then, a few days later, another London landmark has passed away. Landmarks in London do not pay ; insurance offices, banks, monster picture-palaces do. And so the steam-shovels ate their way into Wych Street and Holywell Street, substituting instead Aldwych and Kingsway.

But Soho ! Soho is supposed to be permanent. In Soho time stands still, antiquity slumbers undisturbed, the ghosts of four centuries of occupants stalk in still occupied dwellings. Here the weird old St. Anne's Church rears its tower (crested with a 200-year-old clock) against the twentieth-century traffic, and thousands of taxis make a dizzy turning around the hoary shoulders of this edifice as they pass through Wardour Street and Dean Street. Even in St. Anne's churchyard you may doff your cap to the bones of a king. A tablet on the outer wall bears an inscription by Horace Walpole to the Prussian adventurer, Baron de

Neuhoff, who figured for a few months as Theodore, King of Corsica, but eventually was compelled to escape to London. Here he was arrested for debt, and to obtain his release became insolvent. "As soon as he was set at liberty he took a chair and went to the Portuguese Minister ; but not finding him at home, and not having a sixpence to pay, he desired the chairman to convey him to a tailor in Soho, whom he prevailed upon to harbour him ; but he fell sick the next day and died in three more " on December 11th, 1756.

Theodore was saved from a pauper's grave by John Wright, an oilman of Compton Street, who said that "he did not make a habit of burying kings, but for once he would be willing to pay for a royal funeral." Theodore's memorial tablet is on the west wall of the tower. There is also a modern headstone near-by to the memory of William Hazlitt, who is buried in the church.

Old Compton Street runs by the rails of St. Anne's Church, and has an individuality of its own. A man from any country can be at home here. It is not like any other street in London, or Paris, or Rome, or any other city. One writer tells us this street "might well have been lifted from some French town and dropped down here." This is not strictly accurate, for Old Compton Street shows a decided Italian note, and certainly Italians predominate here.

Many people would look askance at the café known as "Au Chat Noir" in Old Compton Street. The clientèle is very "mixed." It is a most interesting pot-pourri of the shop-keeping middle-class, with a

sprinkling of impecunious journalists, artists, actors, and cinema "stars" (the latter mostly out of work, of course). A motley congregation indeed, but one may pass many an interesting hour looking into the faces here, idly speculating upon the lives these folk lead when they are not playing dominoes and sipping coffee. After dinner, when the lights are lit, and all the seats are taken, one sees "*Au Chat Noir*" at its best. It is like a flower that has suddenly bloomed into glorious life. The proprietor, a young Italian with a swaggering walk, and the mysterious dark eyes of an apache, stands here, or rushes there in a keen, observant manner. He misses nothing. He even anticipates one's wants, and always there is a cheery greeting from the waitress behind the horse-shoe shaped bar.

Lavorna comes in for her coffee every evening and she is known to all. I remember seeing her on my last visit to the café. Her frock was of gilded silk, her lips were crimsoned, and her eyes were full of unholy beauty. She informed me she was a Bohemian, and could not take life seriously. She talked about souls and soup in the same breath. She believed in everything free, and said that no one need work for a living in such a bounteous world. Lavorna also borrowed five shillings from me, and I afterwards reflected if all her friends were as easy to "touch" as I was her theory about the uselessness of work was quite sound.

I still see Lavorna fluttering between the tables of "*Au Chat Noir*," waving a white mobile hand adorned with a strange Oriental ring. I will not believe that

such grace and beauty could be vicious or depraved. . . .

At Moroni's Librairie Italienne-Française (68 Old Compton Street) one can buy the rank Italian cigars and black cigarettes dear to the Latin races. The "Café Rouge," No. 66, is another small place which caters for cosmopolitan customers. Notice a branch of the Banca Commerciale Italiana at No. 30, and the Banca Caprotti in Moor Street which is proud of the fact that it is the "only Italian bank established in Scotland."

A walk in Soho Square will take us to many interesting landmarks. At No. 30 Sir Joseph Banks lived. He sailed with Captain Cook, and in Australia discovered so many unknown plants that he decided to commemorate this fact by giving the name of Botany Bay to a shallow inlet on the coast of New South Wales.

Frith Street runs from the south corner of the Square to Shaftesbury Avenue. At No. 51 Mozart lived as a boy, and Hazlitt died at No. 6 in 1830, with the words "Well, I have had a happy life" upon his lips. Charles Lamb was with him at his death. Greek Street is inseparably associated with Thomas De Quincey. When he ran away from his school at Bath in 1802, and came to London, he lodged in a poor house in this street for some time, wandering daily in the streets and parks. He tried to raise a sum of two hundred pounds on his expectations from the paternal estate; was reduced to penury by his dealings with the Jews; and saved from perishing in the street only by the charity of a young woman who, finding him in a swoon from exhaustion, timeously administered a restorative.



THE HERCULES PILLARS, SOHO

Manette Street twenty-one years ago was one of the roughest and toughest streets in Soho. It is approached by an archway which embraces a very old inn, the "Hercules Pillars." One can hardly escape being impressed by the Dickensian air of the inn and the appealing and pathetic little windows which look out from the rooms above the arch towards Charing Cross Road. An engraved glass window in one of the doors represents Hercules with muscular limbs, curly hair, and somewhat small head. He stands—very wrongly—between two pillars, and holds a club.

The Pillars of Hercules was in reality the name given by the ancients to two rocks flanking the entrance to the Mediterranean at the Strait of Gibraltar. According to one version of the legend, they had once been united, but Hercules tore them asunder to admit the ocean into the Mediterranean; another version represents him as causing them to unite temporarily in order to form a bridge. They seem to have been visited by the Phœnicians about 1100 B.C. Calpe, one of them, is now identified with Gibraltar, and Abyla, the other, with Ceuta.

Manette Street is, of course, a Dickens's landmark, for it was named in memory of Dr. Manette, of *A Tale of Two Cities*, who resided in Soho. Bevington's Organ Works are at the back of the "Hercules Pillars," and the mustily, ancient buildings of this mellow backwater attracted Charles Dickens enough to write :

"In a building at the back, attainable by a courtyard, where a plane-tree rustled its green leaves, church organs claimed to be made, and silver to be

chased, and likewise gold to be beaten by some mysterious giant, who had a golden arm starting out of the wall of the front hall—as if he had been beaten himself precious, and menaced a similar conversion of all visitors.”

Manette Street peeps out of its beetle-browed archway like an elderly courtesan who has risen late after a night of dissipation and sneers at the rest of the world. Yet I like to go back and get a glimpse of her. She interests me strangely, as wicked people always do. Why she interests me is more than I can say, unless, indeed, we class her with the people referred to in that far-reaching prayer: “O Lord, please make the bad people good, and the good people interesting.”

Somewhere about the year 1896 the “Hercules Pillars” was one of the haunts of Francis Thompson. A former manager of the Royalty Theatre, whom I often met in this inn during 1902-8, told me that this remote, secluded scholar frequently rested here and even wrote some of his book reviews for the *Academy* in the bar. My friend had several long talks with the poet, and one evening suggested that Thompson should come back to his room at the Royalty. There, over a bottle of whiskey and cigars, the poet opened out. Thompson must have looked a strange figure in that room as I remember it—a room with sumptuous carpets, dull crimson-plush curtains and gilded furniture. Mr. Wilfred Whitten’s picture of him at this time will give the reader some idea of his appearance:

“Gentle in looks, half-wild in externals, his face worn by pain and the fierce reactions of laudanum,

his hair and straggling beard neglected, he had yet a distinction and an aloofness of bearing that marked him in the crowd ; and when he opened his lips he spoke as a gentleman and a scholar. A cleaner mind, a more naïvely courteous manner, were not to be found. It was impossible and unnecessary to think always of the tragic side of his life. He still had to live and work in his fashion, and his entries and exits became our most cheerful institution. His great brown cape, which he would wear on the hottest days, his disastrous hat, and his dozen neglects and make-shifts were only the insignia of our 'Francis' and of the ripest literary talent on the paper. No money (and in his later years Thompson suffered more from the possession of money than from the lack of it) could keep him in a decent suit of clothes for long. Yet he was never 'seedy.' From a newness too dazzling to last, and seldom achieved at that, he passed at once into a picturesque nondescript garb that was all his own and made him resemble some weird pedlar or packman in an etching by Ostade. This impression of him was helped by the strange object—his fish-basket, we called it—which he wore slung round his shoulders by a strap. It had occurred to him that such a basket would be a convenient receptacle for the books which he took away for review, and he added this touch to an outward appearance which already detached him from millions."

My friend of the Royalty remembers that Thompson excused his bedrabbled clothes by pointing out the venerable truism that everybody is eccentric on some

point and yet nobody ever realizes the fact, and afterwards emphasized this remark with the shrewd, homely tag about the north countryman who said : " There's nowt so queer as folk," to which with a gentle, whimsical sense of the world's apparent incoherent, irrelevant queerness, his good wife replied, " All the world's queer, save thee and me, dear, and thee can be tarnation queer otherwhiles."

Thompson wrapped himself in the mighty lines of the masters of poetry as a beggar would enfold himself in the purple of Emperors. What did it matter if his wardrobe was a rag-and-bone shop and his home a doss-house ? In such a man the outward garments were merely a limit of the insignificance of human effort and frippery in the face of the vast problems and difficulties of eternity. As Wilfred Whitten says :

" Thompson kept his sweetness and sanity, his dewy laughter, and his fluttering gratitude. In such a man outward ruin could never be pitiable or ridiculous, and, indeed, he never bowed his noble head but in adoration. I think the secret of his strength was this : that he had cast upon his accounts with God and man, and thereafter stood in the mud of earth with a heart wrapt in such fire as touched Isaiah's lips. He was humbly, daringly, irrevocably satisfied of his soul."

Here where I keep my stand
With all o'er-anguished feet,
And no live comfort near on any hand ;
Lo, I proclaim the unavoided terms,
When this morass of tears, then drained and firm,

Shall be a land—
Unshaken I affirm—
Where seven-quiured psalterings meet ;
And all the gods move with calm hand in hand,
And eyes that know not trouble and the worm.

Yes, Thompson was a queer fellow. Hunger and poverty were his recreations one day, opium and literature his pastimes the next. Well may we moralize on the incongruousness of this shadow-show world of ours and think of Puck, the good-humoured goblin, who never could make up his mind which dwelling-place suited him the best. The kitchen of the "George Inn" at Southwark with its roast beef and plum puddings attracted him at certain times, and on other nights he was filled with a desire to sleep at a lodging-house in Brook Street where a poet lived in a top attic. Here there was no food, but many tattered books, from which the poet read him gorgeous tales about life and love and poignant stories about death. Poor Puck could not have said for the life of him which lodging was the most satisfactory, and I suppose we are all in the same box since, when we are feeling well and lusty, we demand chops . . . "lots of 'em and underdone—bloody ones with gristle," and when we are feeling contented we ask for those delightful bulgy books full of romance and gallantry. Life will ever be the same where the inevitable doom is always treading on a man's heels, and he, like the moth attracted by the flame of a candle, making for the jollity of a tavern, walks straightway into that land of shadows from which there is no return.

CHAPTER XVI

TWO LITERARY BOHEMIANS

THE portion of Wardour Street under the clock of St. Anne's was formerly known as Prince's Street, and here lived the Reverend Charles Caleb Colton, a man of singular habits and appearance. He was vicar of Kew and Petersham, and ought to have lived in his parish. But an irresistible heart-hunger for the streets of old London gripped him and he knew no happiness unless he was cooped up in some attic in the heart of his beloved city.

In his lodging here he kept fishing-rods, guns, dogs, a cat, and great piles of divine dog's-eared books, and his mode of life was a strange web which is not easy to unravel. He often spent his nights wandering from one tavern to another, and among his friends were pugilists, barn-stormers, poets, and all kinds of odd characters. He was a great gambler and was mixed up with Thurtell's flash gang about the time when Weare was murdered.

He was a shrewd judge of wine, and he opened a wine-cellar beneath a Methodist Chapel in Dean Street. There Cyrus Redding found him among casks and sawdust. "Come down, *facilis descensus Averni!*" was his greeting. "You have Methodism over your head, Colton; I wonder your wine does not turn sour, belonging, as it does, to a son of the Church."

"Wine is reconciling, my dear Redding ; there is no fear of the two doxies disagreeing in the cellar. The pulpit is the place for pulling caps."

It was in his rooms in Prince's Street that Colton wrote *Lacon*. He had a sublime indifference to comfort, and lived in a jumble of books, bottles, fencing-foils, sheepskins, rugs and other curious lumber.

Once when a clerical friend remonstrated with him because he wore a brown suit when he preached before the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland he replied : " I don't care. The Duke might have seen it—he might have told me of it. What then ? I should ask his Royal Highness to have the goodness of remembering that the efficacy of the sermon of a Christian clergyman does not depend on the colour of his breeches."

Two of Colton's favourite taverns still remain unchanged to-day : they are " The Union Arms " and Stone's " Old Chop-House " in Panton Street.

Alaric Watts gives an account of a visit to Colton in Soho :

" I can truly say that the most exaggerated description of a Grub Street author's garret would scarcely have been inappropriate as a picture of Mr. Colton's apartment. . . . Mr. Colton was writing at a deal table in an old baize dressing-gown, and employing for inkstand a broken wine-glass."

Yet he bore the stamp of a gentleman and a man of the world, and when the inevitable bottle of wine was produced its perfume filled the room. By invitation, Watts took Jeremiah Home Wiffen, the translator of *Tasso*, to Prince's Street, and they were well treated. A teal was roasting before the fire, a jug of old Burton

was brought from Stone's in Panton Street, and the meal was followed by wine and poetry.

Many Things in Few Words, Addressed to Those Who Think, such is the subsidiary title of Colton's best-known work. In writing *Lacon* he is said to have been too much indebted to Bacon's *Essays* and William Burdon's *Materials for Thinking*. However, it is a book which displays vigour, inventive power, and much originality. The following aphorisms indicate Colton's literary style and methods. His vision was spiritually wonderful ; but physically hasty and mean :

"An act by which we make one friend, and one enemy, is a losing game ; because revenge is a much stronger principle than gratitude."

"When you have nothing to say, say nothing ; a weak defence strengthens your opponent, and silence is less injurious than a bad reply."

"Relations take the greatest liberties and give the least assistance. If a stranger cannot help us with his purse, he will not insult us with his comments ; but with relations it mostly happens that they are the veriest misers with regard to their property, but perfect prodigals in the article of advice."

"To know a man, observe how he *wins* his object, rather than how he loses it ; for when we fail our pride supports us ; when we succeed it betrays us."

Colton's idle, careless existence as a London Bohemian had a sad ending. He introduced so much wisdom and logic into his books that he had little left for his own life. He gambled all his money away and fled to Paris, leaving many debts behind him. When his life

could only be saved by a surgical operation he blew out his brains.

Of course, Stone's is a landmark. Their super-chops and super-ale are things which we may still console ourselves with on those days when all straight things become crooked, and the blue devils follow us to trip our feet and batter our heads. The old house was opened as a coffee-room in 1770, and the ironwork and carving on the exterior are of the reign of George III. The entrance to the chop-room is a narrow passage covered with fine oak panelling—one of those passages sloping upwards with an adventuresome curve which no modern building ever produces.

If you are an admirer of that sad poet, Francis Thompson, or a lover of old prints, you may cross the road to a quaint old print shop. The place has a picturesque air, and Panton Street has a picturesque air, with all its outworn shabbiness and decay. You walk into the shop just a couple of yards and find piles of prints—sorted out ready for inspection. Things are tidy; things are neat. But with every yard you advance the place becomes darker and untidier. Great battalions of prints are held in reserve in piles of folders; they are also piled in mounds on the floor.

In the little room at the back, where mysterious and vast populations of books and prints are imprisoned for ever in everlasting shade, stands the old desk on which Thompson wrote many of his poems. Mr. MacMaster, the proprietor of the shop, was formerly a high-class boot and shoe maker carrying on his craft at No. 14 Panton Street. It was to this shop that he

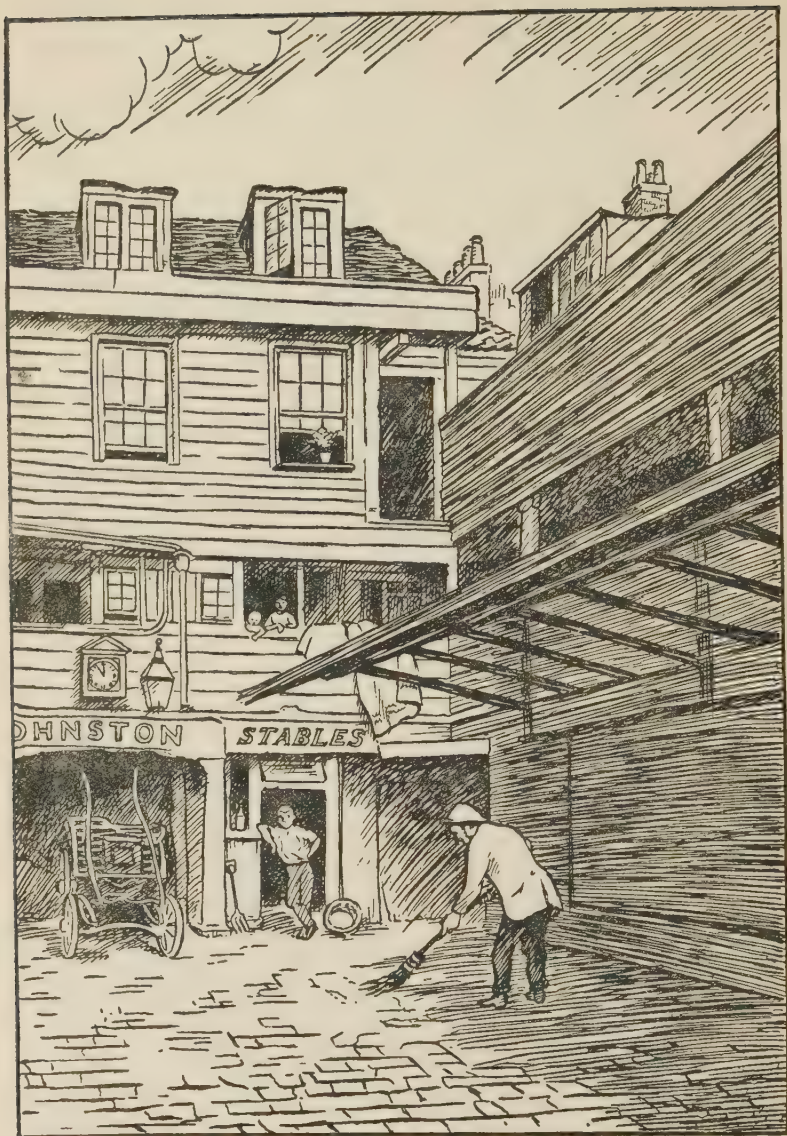
led the starving poet, Francis Thompson, after he had found him selling matches in Fleet Street.

"That chair you are sitting on," said Mr. MacMaster, the print-seller, to me, "was the one which Thompson used when he was in my employ, and, as I think of him this evening, I can see him on the first night he came in the shop. He was the very personification of ruin, a tumble-down, dilapidated opium-haunted wreck. He gave me the impression of having been dropped in the chair—all in a heap. I confess that my first impulse, and a strong one, was to give him a few shillings and get rid of him. No man had a right to be so. . . . A damp rag of humanity."

MacMaster paused, looking reflectively back through the mist of forty years.

"And then suddenly," he continued, "I had a counter-impulse. What was I that I should set myself up to pronounce sentence after a first careless impression? Perhaps, after all, here was a messenger . . . one who carried some secret treasure. So I gave him a job in the shop."

One who carried some secret treasure! My heavens, but this battered scarecrow was indeed carrying a treasure! In the gaping pocket of his coat was a tattered penny exercise book which contained a draft of his poem "The Hound of Heaven." One wonders how many people realize how spherulic in its import was the action of Mr. MacMaster in giving Thompson shelter that night. Turned adrift, the poet might never have completed that poem, which to-day stands alone on a noble monolith upreared beneath the hoary stars on the Plain of Ages.



THE LAST OF THE "NAG'S HEAD" TAVERN, WHITCOMB STREET

Francis Thompson epitomized his own life. While the golden hogs of the market-places rooted up treasures of one kind or another he remained cold and contemptuous. He remained unmoved by worldly treasures . . . unmoved by poverty. But he was a seeker too :

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days ;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years ;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind ; and in the midst of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter
Up vistaed hopes, I sped ;
And shot, precipitated
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.

There we have the whole story of this tragic figure . . . the seeker who for ever shrinks from the Comrade who seeks for him.

Mr. MacMaster, the print-seller, is himself a well-known London topographer, and his *History of the Parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields* is a masterpiece of regional description and tradition.

In Orange Street stands the Royal Tennis Court, re-built in 1887 and now occupied by a famous newspaper and book business. On this building there is a handsome tablet bearing the date 1673. The " Hand and Raquet " Tavern in Whitcomb Street derived its name from the Tennis Court.

CHAPTER XVII

FIDDLERS' ROW

FEW people could tell you the favourite meeting-place for orchestra musicians in London, for London does not know many interesting things about itself. Just as you would never find Petticoat Lane in the London Directory, so you would never trace Fiddlers' Row. The street is officially called Archer Street, and it runs at the back of the Theatre-land of Shaftesbury Avenue. Here is the head-quarters of the Orchestral Association, and every morning at about eleven o'clock the narrow street springs to life with a crush of London musicians of every grade and character. They meet here to discuss musical affairs, arrange tours and theatre engagements, or to exchange news of the musical world generally. There is shouting, whistling, shuffling, laughing, and every luxury of noise. The atmosphere is full of movement and life streams to and fro . . . Italian violinists, negro saxophone players and drummers, song writers, fiddle dealers, violoncellists ; faces seen for a moment and immediately followed by others as interesting ; a flowing gallery of portraits !

Soho from its earliest days was the centre of the violin-making trade in London, and even to-day there are many prominent violin dealers and fiddle-makers in

Wardour Street such as Beau and Goodwin, Anthony Chanot, and Hart and Son. The Hill family, which is looked upon as the head of the fiddle-making and dealing trade in London, removed to Bond Street from Soho about forty years ago.

The Royal Society of Musicians of Great Britain is at 12 Lisle Street. It was established in 1738, and the rooms contain valuable pictures, busts, and mementoes of musicians who have won fame.

Nursery rhymes often afford interesting ground for antiquarian research, and often scraps of song seem to prove more enduring than the treaties of kings. Thus "Sing a Song of Sixpence, a Pocketful of Rye" takes us back to the fiddlers of Charles II. The original "four-and-twenty blackbirds" were twenty-four fiddlers, and their names written in faded ink on age-stained and foxed parchment are hanging on the parlour wall at the Royal Society of Musicians. The document is an order for "These twenty-four gentlemen fiddlers of His Majesty's private concert-room, to attend at Windsor." It bears the date May 16th, 1674, and states the sum to be paid to each fiddler; and very generous was the king with the pocketsful of rye for the leader, Purcell, was to receive £100 and the rest £20 each. However, Charles II could afford to be open-handed for the order for the payment of the "pocketsful of rye" was settled by the Exchequer.

While Charles II was feasting and fiddling our sailors were fighting fearful, drawn battles in the Channel and North Sea with the Dutch. Admiral Blake was begging for money to feed his men :

Mere powder, guns and bullets,
We scarce can get at all,
Their price was spent in merriment
And revel at Whitehall,
While we in tattered doublets
From ship to ship must row,
Beseeching friends for odds and ends—
And this the Dutchmen know !

I picked my way through a passage to a small shop in Archer Street, stepping over a litter of heads, necks, ribs, and bellies of fiddles, and other dismembered limbs of less familiar shape, which lent the place the appearance of an anatomical museum designed to illustrate the structural peculiarities of a race of grotesque wooden goblins. The violin-maker was making a critical inspection of a brand new fiddle which he held lovingly in his hands. Freshly varnished and stained, the shining surface of the fiddle was red and rich and semi-transparent, and the wavy grain of the sycamore wood made a pattern of delicate beauty.

But, however noteworthy the fiddle, the white-aproned, bare-armed craftsman who held it speedily attracted attention from the latest work of his hands to himself. Arthur Scholes, no less than his workshop and his simple tools, is a relic of the fast dwindling race of fiddle-makers ; for in these days the individual craftsman is being forced out of business by large manufacturers, who turn out stringed musical instruments by the thousand.

Few environments would have failed to reveal Mr. Scholes as an anachronism, but, as I now beheld him, he harmonized completely with the background of

ancient fiddles which he had collected in all parts of the world. I noted his dark, deep-set eyes, in which the sparkle of youth was even yet discernible beside the shrewdness and penetration of age; and I also noted his long and well-formed hands—mobile, supple, masterly hands which showed the power and cunning of a craftsman.

“So you still make the fiddle complete from pegs to tail-piece at your own bench!” was my greeting, as I drew near to him.

“Yes, yes,” said Mr. Scholes, without suspending his careful scrutiny, “I still make fiddles in the old way; the last of the Soho fiddle-makers I am.”

“You don’t think that it is possible to turn out a high-grade fiddle when each part is made by a different person and put up in an assembling shop.”

“Pah!” Mr. Scholes held himself erect and made a motion indicative of contempt for the modern fiddle industry. “Turn out fiddles by the score in their factories, don’t they! You can’t call them machine-made because it’s impossible to make fiddles with machines, but no self-respecting violinist would own an instrument that is a patch-work collection of parts made by a dozen different bench hands who have no interest in the instrument as a whole. Come-by-chance fiddles I call them. Now when I make a fiddle I put sixty hours’ work into it, and build it up by a gradual succession of observations and experiments. If a neck or a rib does not come out right I scrap it. Recollect there is no room for error in making a fiddle. The work of the chisel cannot be altered or hidden; it must stand or be thrown away.”

I went into Mr. Scholes' workshop and watched the delicate play of his wrist and hand as he gouged the belly of a fiddle out of a solid piece of maple wood. After the belly is roughed out it is worked smooth with a fiddle-maker's gunmetal plane, a small, toy-like tool no more than a couple of inches long. Next Mr. Scholes takes the rough article and rubs it with sandpaper. He rubs it for an hour and a day. He rubs lovingly, with his soul in his finger-ends, and little by little the rough outline gives way to soft curves, and the finished "table" or "belly" is there waiting for him. Neck, back, ribs, and belly are fitted together and glued, and afterwards varnished. Amber varnish is a favourite with fiddle-makers ; it is made by melting and mixing amber with linseed oil.

"There are cheap fiddles to be bought," said Mr. Scholes with a smile. "I cannot make them. This fiddle will cost twenty-five pounds."

I respected him for saying "cannot" instead of "do not." There spoke the artist.

"I was over in Germany a month or so ago," he said. "You can buy a violin there for five shillings. Some of the cheap German fiddles are perfectly marvellous for the price. A smart fiddle-maker turns out four fiddles in a week, and somehow he manages to just exist on his pitiful wage. But they do not seem to worry much. I told one very clever craftsman that he could earn good money in London, but he only said to me : 'Perhaps I could and perhaps I should starve. I know I can earn enough to buy food here, and that at least is a certainty.'"

Chief among the Soho bow-makers was James

Tubbs of Wardour Street. He died some years ago, but in Mr. Scholes's fiddle surgery there is tangible memorial to Tubbs. It is the sign which was once affixed to the front of his shop at 94 Wardour Street. It bears his name and the Royal Coat of Arms, and was removed to Mr. Scholes's workshop when Tubbs died some years ago.

Tubbs's bows are eagerly sought after by violinists to-day, and they often sell for twenty pounds each. A bow-maker is a distinct trade not to be confused with the fiddle-maker.

Mr. Scholes showed me a Tubbs's bow made of Pernambuco wood and Russian horsehair. That there was enormous elaboration in the bow, from the ornamentation of the ebony nut to the binding of the handle, did not strike me till after several minutes, when I had sufficiently admired the certainty of the old bow-maker's workmanship.

CHAPTER XVIII

MUSINGS IN STRAND LANE AND THE ADELPHI

ON the south side of the Strand, a little way past Somerset House, walking towards Fleet Street, is a narrow passage, now called Strand Lane. This name is a mischievous abbreviation of the original one which was Strand Bridge Lane, and to-day the associations and ancienry of this narrow alley have perished with the missing word. The original names give us a picture of the place in a flash. Consider Strand Bridge Lane as it appeared three centuries ago. Where Denny's Bookshop now stands, No. 163A Strand, possibly the bridge stood in the olden days, the Strand, then a very soggy cart-track, running over it. The stream passed beneath the bridge and down to an open watercourse, which to-day forms Strand Lane. You have only to glance at the precipitous zigzag course of the "lane" to understand that it was once a running stream, and that the lapping of the water shaped its torturous course. By all that's wonderful there is still a feeling of a stealthy current in this lane, and often on a wet, blustery day I have noted how the downpour washes over the water-worn, stone-flagged track and produces a palpable sense of a flowing stream. If you follow the lane to its termination you will find yourself in a blind-alley. Here

the brook joined the Thames, where once stood the "landing-place on the Bank of the Thames" mentioned by Stow. The blocked-up wall at the end of Strand Lane is all which remains of the steps to the river, and near at hand was a row of old tenements formerly known as Golden Buildings, but the name has disappeared. On its western side stood the "Strand Inn." The river steps no doubt were constantly used by the inmates of the inn. Occasionally, however, they afforded accommodation to other persons; and in the *Spectator*, No. 454, we read how Addison "landed with ten sail of apricot boats at Strand Bridge, after having put in at Nine Elms and taken in melons, consigned by Mr. Cuffe of that place to Sarah Sewell and Company, at their stall in Covent Garden."

Newton, in his *London in the Olden Time*, says that the bottom of Strand Lane appears to have been an ancient landing-place, communicating directly with Lambeth, and with the Via de Aldewych, which led toward the north-west country.

It is just worth noting that some twenty years ago an old inhabitant of this Lane told me that at the Thames end of it there was a little settlement of tarred huts and boathouses when she was a girl. The age of the old lady was then about eighty. These huts were probably built about 1800, and were inhabited by some of the last of the Thames fishermen. In the old days the Thames' fish supplied a good half of the demands of London. Old Stow says of the Thames in his day:

"What should I speak of the fat and sweet

salmons daily taken in this stream, and that in such plenty (after the time of the smelt is past) as no river in Europe is able to exceed it ? But what store also of barbels, trouts, chevens, perches, smelts, breams, roaches, daces, gudgeons, flounders, shrimps, eels, etc., are commonly to be had therein, I refer me to them that know by experience better than I, by reason of their daily trade of fishing in the same. And albeit it seemeth from time to time to be, as it were, defrauded in sundry wise of these, her large commodities, by the insatiable avarice of fishermen ; yet this famous river complaineth commonly of no want, but the more it lose that one time it gaineth at another.”

Stow also tells us that, before 1569, the City ditch, without the wall of the City, which then lay open, “contained great store of very good fish, of divers sorts, as many yet living know, who have taken and tasted them, can well witness, but now [he says] no such matter.”

Sir John Hawkins, in his edition of Walton’s *Angler* (1760) mentions that, about thirty years before, the City anglers were accustomed to enjoy their sport by the starlings of old London Bridge :

“In the memory of a person not long since living, a waterman that plied at Essex Stairs, his name John Reeves, got a comfortable living by attending anglers with his boat. His method was to watch when the shoals of roach came down from the country, and, when he had found them, to go round to his customers and give them notice. Sometimes they [the fish] settled opposite the

Temple ; at others, at Blackfriars or Queenhithe ; but most frequently about the chalk [hills the deposit of chalk rubble] near London Bridge. His hire was two shillings a tide. A certain number of persons who were accustomed thus to employ him raised a sum sufficient to buy him a waterman's coat and silver badge, the impress whereof was 'Himself, with an angler in his boat' ; and he had annually a new coat to the time of his death, which might be about the year 1730."

About 1828 the last survivors of the old fishermen were still fishing the Thames, but the water was becoming so filthy that the fishery was almost destroyed.

"A bailiff of Billingsgate Market stated before a Parliamentary Committee that, in 1798, 400 fishermen, each of whom was the owner of a boat, and employed a boy, obtained a good livelihood by the exercise of their craft between Deptford and London, above and below bridge, taking roach, plaice, smelts, flounders, salmon, shad, eels, gudgeon, dace, dabs, etc. Mr. Goldham said that about 1810 he had known instances of as many as ten salmon and 3,000 smelts being taken at one haul up the river towards Wandsworth, and 50,000 smelts were brought daily to Billingsgate, and not fewer than 3,000 Thames salmon in the season. Some of the boats earned £6 a week, and salmon was sold at 3s. and 4s. a pound."

Near the Roman Bath in Strand Lane, spanning the old watercourse, stands the ancient Watch House of the parish of St. Clement Danes. It dates from 1700. The ground-floor contained cells for prisoners taken

into custody, and there was also a small room where each watchman received his leather bottle of ale, rattle, staff, lantern, and treble-caped greatcoat before he was sent to his wooden box to snore away the night. Projecting from the rooms above the vaulted passage of the Watch House is a veranda with a singularly effective grille of beaten ironwork. The ancient house makes an attractive picture with its bent and crooked walls leaning over the narrow lane which still retains a paving of water-worn flagstones. Strand Lane forms one of the boundaries of the Parish of St. Clement Danes. The cast-iron boundary tablets may be seen outside the Roman Bath—each plaque bears an anchor which is the emblem of St. Clement of Rome, who was martyred about the year 100 by being bound to an anchor and thrown into the sea. From this circumstance of his death St. Clement came to be regarded as the saint and intercessor of sailors.

Edward Foord in his *Guide to St. Clement Danes* points out that :

“ A decorative feature which is found everywhere in the Church is the Anchor. It is on the churchwarden's and overseers' pews ; on each side of the four maces ; on the mural monuments, and on the vane at the top of the spire, as well as on the Parish boundary marks. It also appears upon the Rector's house, in Clement's Inn Passage, which, by the way, is called the ‘ Anchorage.’ ”

The old houses of the Adelphi have dignity, beauty, and friendliness. They are reserved without being cold. Between them and before them are fences or

walls. The red-tiled roofs, the generous rooms, the smiling lunettes and finely-proportioned doorways, breathing the influence of those tranquil days when the land beneath Adelphi Terrace was given over to ropewalks and boat-builders' yards, all contribute to the intimacy of this outlawed remnant of the eighteenth century. But before many years have passed the Adelphi will give way to the ever-ravenous appetites of the great builders and speculators. Rumours that the Adelphi Terrace and the Dark Arches beneath it are to be cleared away preparatory to the erection of a big department store on American lines, a theatre, a super hotel, and a palatial block of flats have all been denied. All that we are being told is that the property is to be sold for building purposes.

Only one stronghold in the Adelphi is prepared to resist the attack of the pickaxe and steam-shovel, and that is the home of the Royal Society of Arts in John Street. Four years ago the Society succeeded in buying the freehold of the fine Adam building. Next door to the Society of Arts is the Little Theatre, and there are few people who realize that this was once the "partners room" of Coutts' Bank.

In the early part of the eighteenth century Robert and James Adam set out to build over the ruins of Durham House, a task at that time which few architects would have cared to face. The great difficulty was to raise the level of the ground which sloped down to the Thames. The only way out of the difficulty was to build an artificial level and upon this plateau to erect their houses. All London treated their scheme as a joke, and the first stages of the building operations

gave the Press a good opportunity to greet the project with amused contempt. However the Scottish blood in the Brothers Adam came out with a remarkable intensity, and once they entered into this hard and long task they allowed nothing to frustrate their plans.

In 1773 the scheme was checked for want of money, and the canny brothers, knowing the love of the average Londoner for a gamble, obtained a private Act of Parliament to permit them to run a lottery and thus secure further capital to carry on their work. The act was officially set down as "An Act for enabling John, Robert, James and William Adam to dispose of various buildings in the parishes of St. Martin-in-the-Fields and St. Mary-le-Strand, and other their effects by way of chance, in such a manner as may be most for the 'benefit of themselves and their creditors.'" Four thousand £50 tickets were issued, and the first prize, a truly magnificent one, was £25,000. That the brothers Adam overcame all obstacles and emerged from the scheme successfully may be verified by the pilgrim who wanders about the Adelphi to-day. The "dark arches" which make a table-land for Adelphi Terrace may be inspected if you turn off the Strand at the Tivoli and go down a flight of steps. In this mysterious series of subterranean galleries Coutts' Bank built storerooms for their treasures and specie, so that in the event of any civil disturbances the contents of the rooms could be speedily slipped down the Thames and over to France. The Jacobite Rising of '45 was still in the memory of the people at this time, and further commotions were expected. It is a curious thing that Messrs. Coutts, the Whig bankers, did

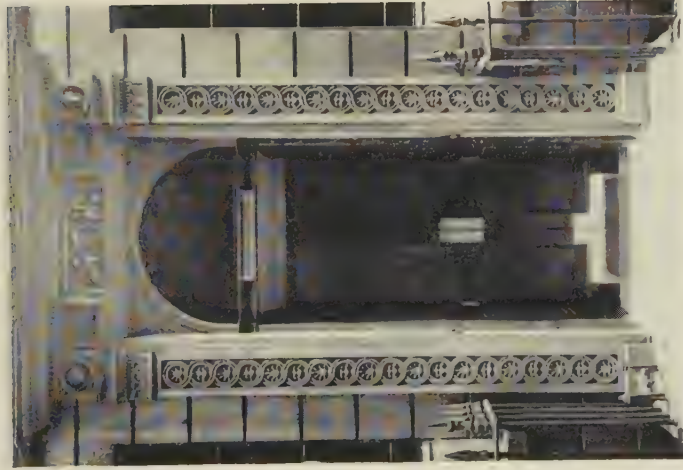
not hold the Adelphi property in the end, for it passed into the hands of their Jacobite rival Drummonds Bank. Fifty years ago—before literary men received such enormous fees—the Adelphi was the centre for starving poets and Bohemians of all sorts. Life in the Adelphi lodgings was hectic. Happy-go-lucky, care-free, irresponsible, the Fleet Street brotherhood lived for the day before them—or rather the night. It has been said that the wardrobe of the true Adelphite consisted only of a dressing-gown and a dress suit. But the old Bohemian days are over, and the survivors have retreated to the Savage Club at Nos. 6 and 7 Adelphi Terrace, where nightly they gather around their titular chieftain “the Odell,” who sits like some benign Buddha in a chair which is sacred to his sixty years of membership. The total value of the Adelphi property is about a million, and he will have to be a very rich man who buys this relic of old London to safeguard it from the vandals. If some of the famous men who live in the Adelphi would come forward and help it might be preserved. The only solution I can think of is that George Bernard Shaw and Sir James Barrie should write a movie scenario and devote the proceeds to an Adelphi Preservation Fund. Many distinguished men live in the Adelphi. Lord Weir, Dr. Haden Guest, and Mr. L. J. Maxe live there. Thomas Hardy lived at No. 8 Adelphi Terrace at the time he was studying architecture under Sir A. Blomfield during the years 1863-1867.

The front of the flat which was formerly occupied by Shaw is in Robert Street. The entrance is one of the finest Adam doorways in London. The carvings

over the beautiful glass fan-light are in a splendid state of preservation considering the fact that they have faced London fogs and river mists for one hundred and fifty years. The two mocking faces over the doorway seem to be in keeping with the former master of the house. One of the carved faces looks out on the passer-by with a curled mouth which strangely suggests the look of Satanic self-possession that one sees in the photographs of Bernard Shaw.

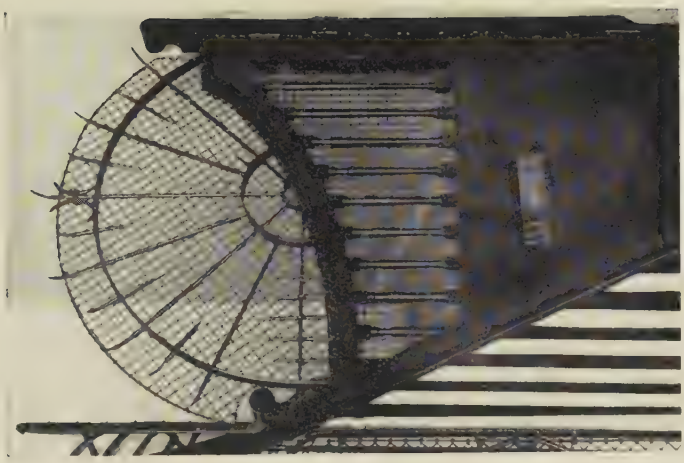
As you look out from the Terrace over the river you see the tall Shot Tower which at night intermittently flashes out an electric tea sign. Shaw loved this sign and always pointed it out to his guests as a beautifully picturesque landmark of the London night.

At the corner of John Street is the Adelphi Hotel, a meeting-place for artists, newspaper reporters and publishers. It is also a Dickens's landmark, for the hotel is introduced into *Pickwick Papers* under the name of Osborn's. Mr. Pickwick rested here after his temporary stay in the Fleet Prison, and at this hostelry the fat boy stabbed Mr. Pickwick's leg with a fork.



ADAM DOORWAY, ROBERT STREET, ADELPHI

This is the entrance to the flat formerly occupied by Bernard Shaw. The author now occupies a flat in Whitehall Court



STEEL GRILLE AT BERNARD SHAW'S FLAT, ADELPHI TERRACE.

CHAPTER XIX

FLEET STREET TO PICCADILLY CIRCUS

A LONG Fleet Street and the Strand there are many old-fashioned courts and alleys cloistered away from the bustle of the streets, and a thorough exploration of these little bits of lost London would take a full week. In these quiet courts full of delightfully wilful irregularity, you will see a strange and pleasing assortment of the old mellow red-tiled roofs ; of iron lamps ; of old-fashioned doors.

Here are bow windows and carved door-posts ; here are shops whose floors were dug below the ground-level five hundred years ago. Here are arches and stone steps which have something of the colour, something of the quaintness, something of the slumbrous charm, of some mediæval town in Italy.

A charming sample is George Court opposite Charing Cross Hospital. A low arch and a dropping flight of worn stone steps break the building line and take you to a patch of shops and an inn. You are in another century. Everything has been standing still here since the days of wigs and Sedan chairs. It is a village in miniature. It has miniature shops with miniature rooms.

The George Inn stands at the foot of the steps and its brick walls are beginning to bulge in front like an elderly gentleman growing a paunch. Here are iron lamp grilles and balconies of a strangely haunting

quality, and here on a wet and cold night the open fire-place at "The George" is one of the most homely spots in all London for a lonely wanderer.

Just near the Savoy Hotel is Savoy Buildings. This alley was once known as Fountain Court, a name derived from the Fountain Tavern which stood on the north-west corner where Simpson's Restaurant now stands.

Opposite the Vaudeville Theatre is Ivy Bridge Lane. It runs by the side of the Hotel Cecil. Here, long ago, when the villagers of Charing Cross made their way across a solitary field path to the river's shelving beach, stood a bridge over which sprawled clustered stems of ivy. It is now ugly and dreary cutting between blind brick walls. Near the bridge stood the "Fox-under-the-Hill" Inn which Dickens mentions in *David Copperfield*:

"I was fond of wandering about the Adelphi, because it was a mysterious place with those dark arches. I see myself emerging one evening from one of those arches, on a little public-house close to the river."

The little public-house is the inn from which the "Micawbers" departed for Australia.

It is a pity that the right of way through Ivy Bridge Lane has been obstructed. In 1860 the passage was a picturesque cobbled path, almost roofed from the Strand to the pier at the end by the bulgy upper-parts of the ancient houses. This pier was used as the landing-stage of the halfpenny steamboats that used to ply between the Strand and London Bridge, but was discontinued after an explosion of the "Cricken" at the

“ Fox ” pier (so called after the “ Fox-under-the-Hill ” Tavern), in 1847. The place is mentioned by both Stow and Strype. The former says that the lane “ parted the Liberty of the Duchy (of Lancaster) and the city of Westminster on the south side,” and that the “ bridge ” had been lately taken down. Strype adds that the road was very bad and almost impassable.

Craven Street, in the Strand, bears a street tablet dated 1860 with a carved heraldic dragon. At a quiet little old house (Barnett’s Hotel, No. 39) Charles Dickens made the home of Mr. Brownlow, the benefactor of *Oliver Twist*. Few people know this tranquil little retreat which possesses a very ancient licence to sell ale only. You had better enter, for the sake of the saloon where you drink ale in an Early Victorian room attended by a parlourmaid in starched cap and apron. The old house possesses fine Early-Georgian mantelpieces, window-carvings and iron-work.

Hungerford Street, where Charles Dickens worked as a lad in the blacking factory of his relative Lambert, receiving 6s. a week, ran behind Hungerford Market (Charing Cross Station stands there now) and down to the Thames.

At No. 27 Craven Street lived James Smith, the humorist, principal author of *Rejected Addresses*. He died at this house in 1839. His punning rhyme on Craven Street is very clever :

“In Craven Street, Strand, the attorneys find place,
And ten dark coal barges are moored at its base.
Fly, Honesty, fly ! seek some safer retreat :
There’s craft in the river, and craft in the street.”

But cleverer was Sir George Rose's answer :

Why should Honesty fly to some safer retreat
From attorneys and barges ?—'od rot 'em !
For the lawyers are *just* at the top of the street,
And the barges are *just* at the bottom.

Much—yes, I will concede, too much, has been written about “Ye Old Cheshire Cheese.” It is one of the overdressed windows of Fleet Street. And yet it is a dear and favoured haunt of Londoners and must be included. The vaults beneath it are the remains of the old establishment of the Bishops of Peterborough. Thomas Wilson Reid's booklet on *The Cheese*, which was published in 1886 is now rather scarce, but although it contained 130 pages there is little in it that is not mere twaddle and padding.

In his *Fifty Years' Recollections, Literary and Personal* (1858), Mr. Cyrus Redding writes :

“I often dined at the ‘Cheshire Cheese.’ Johnson and his friends, I was informed, used to do the same, and I was told I should see individuals who had met them there ; this I found to be correct. The company was more select than in later times. Johnson had been dead about twenty years, but there were Fleet Street tradesmen who well remembered both Johnson and Goldsmith in those places of entertainment. There was a Mr. Tyers, a silk merchant on Ludgate Hill, and Colonel Lawrence, who carried the colours of the twentieth regiment at the battle of Minden, ever fond of repeating that his regimental comrades bore the brunt on that celebrated day.”

An interesting record of the old tavern will be found in *The English Illustrated Magazine*, 1889-1890, under the name of W. Outram Tristram, who writes of the house's roll of famous visitors as follows :—

“ Voltaire was certainly here ; Bolingbroke in this place cracked many a bottle of Burgundy ; and Congreve's wit flashed wine inspired, while Pope, sickly and intolerant of tobacco smoke, suffered under these low roofs, I doubt not, many a headache. But it is of its distinguished visitors of later days that the ‘ Cheshire Cheese ’ as it now stands reminds one most fully. Johnson, Garrick, Goldsmith, and Chatterton were undoubted frequenters. Many a time the great Samuel, turning heavily in his accustomed seat and beset by some pert sailing pinnace, brought, like a galleon manœuvring, his ponderous artillery to bear. Goldsmith lived at No. 6 Wine Office Court, where he wrote or partly wrote *The Vicar of Wakefield*, his fagging inspiration possibly gaining assistance from the tavern's famed Madeira.

“ In a house which still stands in Gough Square, Johnson lived from 1748 to 1758, struggling, with that heavy pertinacity which was his, through some of the darkest years of his life.”

At 146 Fleet Street you will see Radford's Tobacco Shop where the lights glow diffusely from many-paned windows into Wine Office Court. The original old shop sign, the Ship and Star, dated about 1700, is still preserved here, and a print of it appears on all Radford's tobacco wrappers.

Let us turn from Fleet Street into Whitefriars Street

and take the dozen or so steps which lead up to that passage with the haunting name of Hanging Sword Alley—a place strangely suggestive, on a misty October night, of sinister deeds, of masks and swords. This narrow alley was once the back door to Alsatia, the home of ruffians, swashbucklers, and scoundrels of every description. The Carmelite Friars extended the sanctuary in their precinct, and, after the dissolution of the monasteries, the privilege was claimed by every ruffian who retired to this haunt to escape justice. For years the place was given over to lawlessness. Some time in the reign of James I Whitefriars acquired the name of “*Alsatia*.” The origin of this name is uncertain; but Cunningham is probably right in tracing it to the province of Alsace which, as a debatable ground, was frequently occupied alternately by French and German fighting-men. The Whitefriars precinct, he suggests, stood much in the same position to the Temple as Alsace did to France.

“In the Temple students were studying to observe the law, and in *Alsatia*, adjoining, debtors to avoid and violate it—the *Alsatians* were troublesome neighbours to the *Templars*, and the *Templars* as troublesome neighbours to the *Alsatians*.”

Look down the dark rooms sunk below the ground-level in the alley. These houses are very old . . . old enough to have been standing since 1700. Go down the winding stairs into the cobwebby darkness. Things are ancient; they are mouldy. Many of these cellars led out to Whitefriars, and the *Alsatians* scuttled down them like rats when the King’s troopers were riding down some fugitive from justice.

Davenport Adams, in *The Streets of London*, gives the following literary associations of Alsatia :

The name Alsatia first occurs in Thomas Powell's tract, 1623 :

"Wheresoever you see Mee Trust unto Yourselfe ; or, The Mysteries of Lending and Borrowing."

It is next found in Otway's play of *The Soldier's Fortune*, 1681.

And again in Shadwell's celebrated comedy of *The Squire of Alsatia*, 1688, to which Scott has been indebted for some of the materials used so skilfully in *The Fortunes of Nigel*.

Sir Walter Scott in *The Fortunes of Nigel* has painted a striking picture of this region.

"The ancient sanctuary at Whitefriars (says Scott) lay considerably lower than the elevated terraces and gardens of the Temple, and was therefore generally involved in the damps and fogs arising from the Thames. The brick buildings by which it was occupied crowded closely on each other, for, in a place so rarely privileged, every foot of ground was valuable ; but, erected in many cases by persons whose funds were inadequate to their speculations, the houses were generally insufficient, and exhibited the lamentable signs of having become ruinous while they were yet new. The wailing of children, the scolding of their mothers, the miserable exhibition of ragged linens hung from the windows to dry, spoke of the wants and distresses of the wretched inhabitants ; while the sounds of complaint were mocked and overwhelmed in the riotous shouts,

oaths, profane songs, and boisterous laughter that issued from the ale-houses and taverns, which, as the signs indicated, were equal in number to all the other houses ; and that the full character of the place might be evident, several faded, tinselled, and painted females looked boldly at the strangers from their open lattices, or more modestly seemed busied with the cracked flower-pots, filled with mignonette and rosemary, which were disposed in front of the windows, to the great risk of the passengers."

As you pass along Hanging Sword Alley to-day you will feel beneath your feet a curious throbbing and pounding. . . . It is one of the great newspaper machines at work. It is the voice of the Press. A sound that carries strange, bitter-sweet memories to any man who has worked in a newspaper office.

Turn from Fleet Street and walk to the little Round Church within the confines of the Inner Temple. It originally belonged to the religious and military Order of the Knights Templars (founded at Jerusalem about 1118, and so called from their original designation as "Poor Soldiers of the Temple of Solomon"). This edifice consists of two portions : The Round Church, Late Norman, completed 1185 ; and the Choir, Early English, 1240. Both were completely restored in 1839-42. The lawyers at one time received their clients in the Round Church, each having his separate station.

To the rich arabesques of the roof and the tiled pavement the visitor will direct his attention ; but worthier of note are the monuments of Templars of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—each of dark

marble, a recumbent figure in full armour, with folded palms, an impressive enough sight. All are fine specimens of statuary. This little chapel is a beautiful strange calm place of the past. Near by is the vibration of the traffic of the Strand. A soft, full, steady drone, calm and even as the flow of time. But here in the dim light of the chapel is utter peace. An old, silent monument of the past rising up in a world that thinks of little else but the rush and struggle for money and the seeking for sensation. A sacred place of clustered pillars, stained glass, rich decoration, and recumbent, mail-clad knights. The Church of the Knights Templars. A solemn name; a romantic name; a name which brings with it a flood of memories. As I stood where the cross-legged "Crusaders" lie in stone effigy I was well content to be alive—to abandon myself to long, long thoughts of which took me from London to Marseilles, and across the Mediterranean to Egypt and Palestine.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem; standing in the Round Church I recalled the night that I first looked upon the church that guards the grave of Christ. The moonlight had made all the world a vast panorama of romantic mystery, and the shadows on the winding alley which led to the "parvis" were sumptuous and soft like velvet . . . half the paved court was turned to ivory and gold. I stood on the top of the three steps for a few moments, and then descended to the double door of the basilica, and as I crossed the pavement something made me stop and glance downwards. I found myself standing on the tombstone of an English knight, Philip d'Aubigny, tutor to Henry III.

Then in one flash the little Round Church in the Temple with its mail-clad knights came back to me, and following that the Strand, Fleet Street . . . London. Instantly, and for ever, the Temple Church connected itself with Jerusalem, and now it is impossible to separate these two impressions, born far apart. It was no mere chance which made me look down at that ancient grave slab, and it was some affinity surer than any power of taste or selection that caused my mind to link this great, gloomy building with the Templars' Chapel in London.

Somewhere in the depths of my consciousness I knew that this English knight had lived seven hundred years to speak to me. . . . Me . . . a verminous, tattered, malaria-haunted scarecrow of a fellow with a sand-choked rifle. . . . After the British troops had entered Jerusalem I read in a paper received from London that the tombs of the Crusaders in the Templars Church had been decked with laurels. That was the outward link between the "Poor Soldiers of the Temple" and Allenby's troops, but the real and inward link is deep in the heart of every true Englishman.

When the Round Church was first built the Strand was simply the shelving beach of the River Thames, a desolate, damp, miry place, riddled with brooklets and streams. The water bubbled and lapped in the dikes when the tide worked in the river, and the foot-bridges across the streams were mantled with ivy and choked with water weeds. Across this waste of mud and shingle, the young knights came from the Abbey after Edward I had conferred knighthoods on them, and here at the Round Church they held vigil through

the night beside their swords and armour. The discipline of the Templars was austere, excluding all needless luxury or display in food, dress or armour, and all worldly pleasures were forbidden—hawking and hunting all animals, with the characteristic exception of the lion. Married brethren were admitted, but no woman might enter the order, and all brethren were enjoined to shun the kiss of woman, even of mother or sister. The beard was worn, the hair cut short, and all slept alone in shirt and breeches, with a light constantly burning.

One might pass the steps to Carlton House Terrace a hundred times without knowing it. But Lord Kitchener, during the early part of the war, knew them well, and was frequently seen using them as a short cut from Pall Mall to his house. At the end of Warwick House Street a blank wall proclaims to the passer-by that this turning forms a *cul-de-sac*. But as a matter of fact there is a right-of-way through Carlton Mews which leads up an ancient flight of steps to the "Terrace." As we pass through Warwick House Street, we notice a small public-house, with the sign of "The Two Chairmen"—referring, of course, to the time when "sedan chairs," or, as they were commonly called, "chairs," were in vogue. This house is a meeting-place for the Messengers of the great shipping companies and banks of Cockspur Street. Carlton Mews are growing antiquated, and their roughly-paved yards no longer ring with the blacksmith's hammer and the clop-clop-clop of horses moving over the cobbles. Only the drone of motors give the place a measure of life to-day.

However, Carlton Mews have a place in local history. In the courtyard for many years the mounted police have been held in reserve when any trouble has been brewing in Trafalgar Square. When riotous and disorderly mobs gather in the West End the mounted police are wisely kept out of sight until their help to keep order is really required, and this is one of their secret posts. In this way it is easier for the police to avoid any friction with the crowd which might be likely to provoke hostilities.

Your foreign friend is sometimes impressed with the sword-like weapon carried by the mounted police. It has the handguard of a sword, but it is merely a long ash staff with a cane core to prevent it from snapping. It is well bound with twisted cord, and I was told by a mounted officer that it is a very effective "persuader."

"We would rather have these staffs than swords or firearms," the policeman told me, "common-sense, patience, and a poke in the ribs with a staff have often broken up disorderly crowds, where firearms would have been useless."

When we ascend the steps at the Mews we are in the lovely quarter of Carlton House Terrace. The charm of this forgotten terrace is little known to most Londoners; it is a spot which the twentieth century seems hardly to have touched. The houses are some of the most exclusive and aristocratic in London. One noticeable point about the mansions on this terrace is the very deep stone-lined basements.

At No. 11 Carlton House Terrace Mr. Gladstone resided. At No. 9 is the German Embassy, the scene



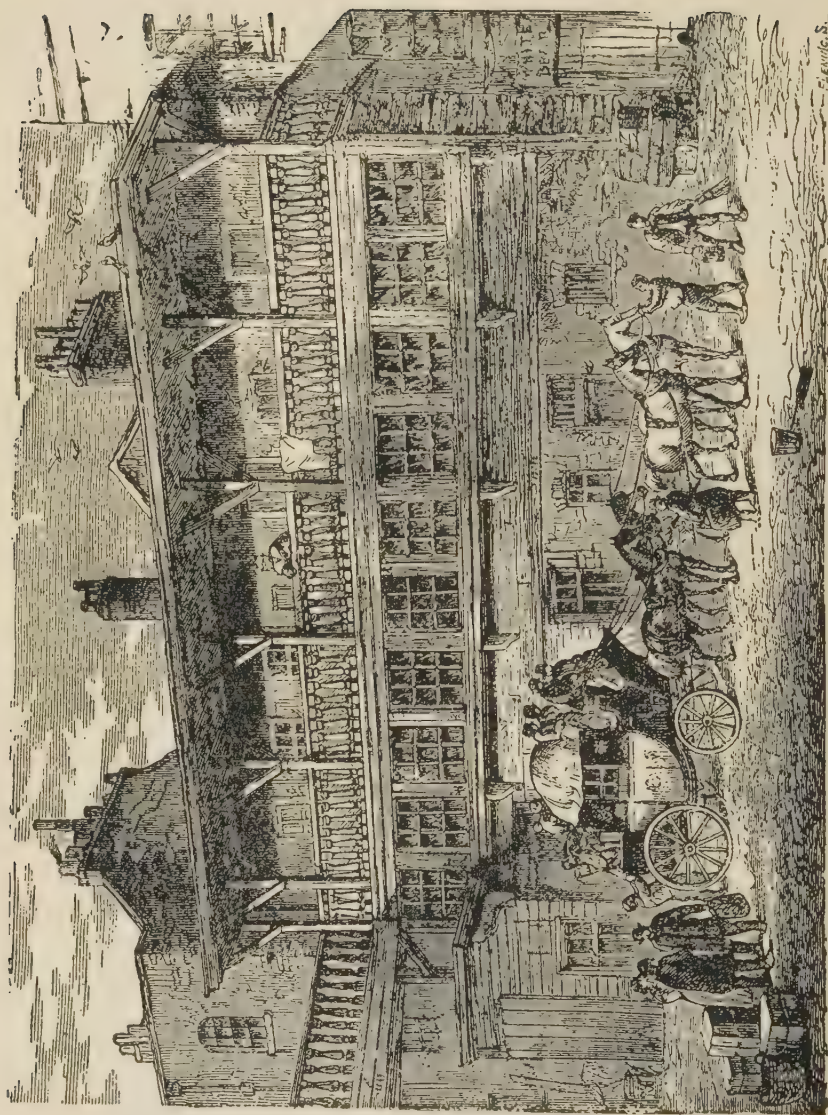
CARLTON MEWS

in 1914 of some of the most fateful developments in the history of our Empire. No. 8 is also an annexe of the Embassy. At the end of the Terrace is a quiet square called Carlton Gardens. No. 2 was the residence of Lord Kitchener during 1914-1915. The square is delightfully situated, overlooking the Park, and in the centre is a garden containing one of London's unknown treasures—a statue of Pan.

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Thirty years ago the Long Bar at the "Criterion" was one of the most popular trysts for the Stage Door Johnnies and Bright Youths of Town. Those were the days of "golden quids," tall hats, and hansom cabs, when the Americans had not cornered the world with the almighty dollar. "Growler" coachmen still dressed in coats with many capes, like the postilion in the "Courier of Lyons." Piemen with cans "tossed" for pies in our public streets. The chop-house floors were still carpeted with sand and the chop-eaters were seated in pews—hard and uncomfortable but, somehow, cosy. A few of the old Private Banks still flourished, but the great Joint Stock Banks were already elbowing them out of the running. The snug little, dead little, London of the mid 60's was then slowly growing into the huge, indifferent presence which we know to-day.

Even the memories of London as it was thirty years ago are fading. . . . The London we middle-aged people remember so well, whether we come to bury it or to praise it, is as dead as Cæsar. That is London all over : it soon forgets. It has forgotten the Long Bar



OLD WHITE BEAR INN, PICCADILLY, 1820

The site is now occupied by the Criterion Restaurant.

at the "Criterion" as it forgot the old "White Bear Inn" which stood on the same site before it. Few Londoners realize that an inn with a great galleried courtyard stood in Piccadilly up to 1820. The drawing of it here reproduced shows it as it appeared at that time.

In 1873 Messrs. Spiers and Pond built the "Criterion" Restaurant and Theatre over the ground that was once occupied by the White Bear, which for a century had been one of the busiest coaching-houses in London. Mr. Larwood, in his *History of Signboards*, tell us that at this inn Benjamin West, the future President of the Royal Academy, put up and spent the night on his first arrival in London from America. Here, too, he tells us, died Luke Sullivan, the engraver of some of Hogarth's most famous works, and another engraver, Chatelain—the latter in such poverty that he was buried, at the expense of friends who had known him in better days, in the poor-ground attached to St. James's workhouse.

The Long Bar at the "Cri." is no more than a memory; and the young bloods are now old fogeys. To-day several small bars, and a Café Brasserie at the Jermyn Street side have taken the place of the old drinking-bar with its mosaics, parquetry, painted frescoes, mirrors, and gildings, and the old "Criterion" has been reconstructed.

So we see how London in a short time crushes out and floods over phases and landmarks with a juggernaut-like callousness and decision. The old landmarks are pulled down, and new buildings rise up, and London receives them without protest or surprise. It can always provide the correct background for any

phenomenon that may rise up, whether it be a freak building or some fantastic human being. London as a background is magnificent ; it tones itself to every change in character or feature. It always strikes the right note ; it has a spirit which seems to blend well with every emotion, with every taste, with every race. London never thrusts itself forward on the stranger ; it never derides the crank or the clown, for in its tolerance it accepts the buffoon and the genius with the same measure of partiality. It finds a living and an audience for every class, for every peculiarity of dress, of face, of religion. It reduces or assimilates all who tarry long within her walls, it is a gigantic mill which grinds all her grain into the singular and inevitable meal which produces the Londoner. Perhaps I am wrong in printing the word Londoner, for it might almost be argued that the Londoner is extinct ; nay, it might be said that he is a shadowy fellow who has never existed. We talk of the man who knows his London, and we talk of the Londoner when we really should talk of the man who has lived in London all his life without knowing the history of the street he has lived in. However we must allow the term "Londoner," and when we have found the true specimen we must not ask him the way from Pall Mall to Clerkenwell Gate, for such mysteries are only known to young Scottish policemen and postmen. The foreigner, in fact, knows more of the sights of London than the Londoner, and that is only natural, for nobody becomes even a potential Londoner until he leaves the great London auditorium and steps her stage as an actor. And once he becomes an actor he is so fully

occupied with the play that sight-seeing is out of the question . . . purposeless . . . He will not visit his great Abbey because it is not so much a topographical fact to him as a part of his inner-consciousness ; he, in fact, has become a part of the Abbey as the Abbey has become a part of him. He will not, to-morrow or the next day, induce aching feet at the Tower, because the Tower stands in the depths of his consciousness just as bravely as it stands on the Thames.

London will always provide a " home from home " for the homeless, a hiding-place for the refugee ; a garden of consolation for the unhappy. Laurence Binyon, from his lair at the British Museum, sees London the great consoler :

As I walked through London,
The fresh wound burning in my breast,

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A sudden consolation, a softening light
Touched me : the streets alive and bright,
With hundreds each way thronging, on their tide
Received me, a drop in the stream, unmarked, unknown.
And to my heart I cried :

Here can thy trouble find shelter, thy wound be eased !

For see, not thou alone,

But thousands, each with his smart,

Deep-hidden, perchance, but felt in the core of the heart !

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So I to my aching breast

Gathered the griefs of those thousands, and made them my own
My bitterest pains

Merged in a tenderer sorrow, assuaged and appeased.

When I think of those people who can "do" London in seven days ; those Americans who spend a month in London and "guess they know London as well as the next man" ; those young men who write books on the heart of London and the soul of London, I repeat to myself : " Oh, you Globe-trotters, you brazen adventurers . . . you terrors of the Bond Street tea-shops . . . this London which escaped from Hogarth and Dickens and Pepys is not to be pursued and overtaken by striplings ; this London is older and craftier than Defoe and Shakespeare. Bite off a little piece of London, my young sirs, and chew and chew and chew . . . perhaps in ten years, if you give all your waking hours to it, you will learn something about the ground which now lies beneath your luxurious hotel ; and, meanwhile, I will pray that you may be blessed with those qualities of temperament which are necessary for your task, to wit : great sympathy, a life-long engrossment in your subject ; an immense knowledge of other cities ; and an adamantine impersonality which will allow you to see and write of all things cold-bloodedly. But you who do London in seven days ! Air, there. Give me air. I grow dizzy at the thought of it."

In the angle formed by the meeting of Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road is Rathbone Place, which still exhibits a stone tablet announcing " RATHBONES PLACE IN OXFORD STREET, 1718." Mr. Charles Harper points out that :

" This date gives us the period of the westward growth of London along this route. Beyond it,

when Captain Rathbone began his building operations, the road was 'a dangerous hollow way, full of ruts and mud, bordered here and there with hedgerow houses, the ragged resorts of thieves and cut-throats.' "

It is a curious thing that the tablet should mention Oxford Street at this date, for most people knew the thoroughfare as Tyburn Road until about 1725. In Ralph Aggas's plan of London the commencement of this street is designated "The Way to Uxbridge"; further on, in the same plan, the highway is called "Oxford Road." In this map cows are represented grazing in a field on the site now occupied by Rathbone Place.

In spite of the grime and warped and shabby buildings in the courts near Rathbone Place, there is just a faint echo of the rural life of long ago in two ancient inns hereabouts. Peep into Cresses Street and you will see the "Bricklayers Arms," which, removed from its sordid environment, would become quite picturesque in the market-place of a country town. Its wavy, red-tiled roof, dormer windows, and courtyard arch look venerable enough to have known the days when the windmill was grinding corn in Windmill Street. Again, the "Wheatsheaf Inn," in Percy Mews, suggests a coaching inn with a wide courtyard. The Mews remind us of the "Percy" Coffee-house where the idea of the "Percy Anecdotes" was first discussed. The work was edited by "Sholto" and "Reuben Percy." Peter Cunningham points out that the work was first started by two friends, Mr. George Byerley and Mr. Joseph C. Robinson, who assumed

the *nom de plume* of the Brothers Percy, of a certain apocryphal monastery. These brothers also wrote a *History of London* in three small volumes.

In Rathbone Place is the famous firm of Jackson and Sons, the fibrous plaster experts, and a twilight visit to their workshops gave me one of those peeps of unknown London which often befall when least expected. Here is one of the forgotten links with the Adelphi, for when the Adam Brothers, with true Scottish economy, replaced wood carving with plaster ornamentation, Messrs. Jackson were chosen by them to carry out the work. Many people still think that the Adam mantelpieces, doors, and lunettes are of carved wood, but they are mistaken; all their delicate interior ornamentations are of fibrous plaster.

Messrs. Jacksons' workshops, tier on tier, give the impression of the galleries of a great museum, for on the walls, galleries, and bridges are plaster casts and "squeezes" of every description. The ornamentation of palaces and buildings all over the world have been laid under contribution to supply the designs, and Messrs. Jacksons' craftsmen have woven into the work the best that their hands could produce. The long studio may be called the Versailles of workshops, and even in broad daylight is such a place as men decorate for themselves in uneasy dreams . . . the work of goblins rather than men. Multitudinous figures and faces mock you at every step; tun-bellied Bacchus . . . Medusa with the snakes . . . Mephistopheles . . . Gustave Doré could have painted a wonderful picture of this place. . . . As in the gloom of that artist's pictures, ragged beggars and miserable hovels in the back-

ground become grand and suggestive ideals, so in this great rambling workshop common things take on a weird, unreal look—the box-like plaster moulds change to coffin-shape ; the tall pillars loom like monuments.

The founder of this firm introduced fibrous plaster interior decoration into England, somewhere about 1810. This was one of the red-letter events in the architectural calendar, and it was no nine days' wonder for now it is still universally used. The old plaster work was done with solid cow-hair and lime, and a ceiling that now weighs, say a ton, then weighed five times as much. Mr. Jackson pointed to a section cut from a Tudor hair and lime ceiling which was being used as a model in making a fibrous plaster imitation.

“ There is an example of the old method. Feel the weight of it . . . when a ceiling like that falls on your head it is no light matter. This work is about 300 years old, and we are replacing it with an exact copy made in fibrous plaster. Notice how faithfully our craftsmen have reproduced the wavy surface and venerable appearance in the new job.”

Fibrous plaster is made of wood lath, canvas (called “ scrim,” and similar to the lining-cloth used in upholstery) and plaster. The decorations are first fashioned and shaped in clay, after which a gelatine mould is taken, and from this mould a plaster cast is obtained. The plaster decorations are mounted on skeleton frames which are screwed on the walls or joists in sections. The joints are afterwards sealed with plaster.

Hundreds of boxwood moulds are kept in strong-rooms in the cellars, and many are the original ones

used by the Adam Brothers. It is thought that some of them are the work of the great sculptor, John Flaxman, who lived at No. 7 Buckingham Street from 1796 to 1826. It is certain that Flaxman must have followed the progress of compo-stucco decoration with a keen interest when it was used so extensively in the Adelphi.

The old wooden moulds show very fine craftsmanship, and are dressed with linseed oil to preserve their delicate designs.

Mr. Jackson—who, by the way, is the great grandson of the founder of the firm—directed the construction of Sir Edwin Lutyens' first cenotaph, which was a dummy one in fibrous plaster, used in place of the stone monument. It is a curious fact that the dummy one looked so solid that many people thought it was stone and could not understand why it was going to be demolished.

As we made our way back to the office Mr. Jackson switched on a light . . . out of the walls there leaped a collection of masks . . . Pan's face, white and devilish, with strange pointed ears; masks of comedy and tragedy; scowling masks and masks of terror. In one corner a fibrous plaster Egyptian deity menaced one with his dagger, and scores of figures gave back the electric gleam. There seemed no visible roof to the place. The light faded away, and above, the galleries and bridges became awe-inspiring silhouettes of the twilight.

If we cross Piccadilly Circus to Sherwood Street we shall find Snow's Chop House which faces the entrance to the Regent Palace Hotel. The iron lamp-bracket

with a decorative grid-iron, the wood panelling and the bottle-glass windows still keep some of the virtues of the older building. Inside we still have the pews, and



A LONDON CHARACTER—DOG HAWKER IN PICCADILLY
(About 1870)

the independence and simplicity of the house is shown in the bill-of-fare, which is moderate in price and English in selection. Many people visit Snow's to read their large selection of papers and magazines, for

you will note by the sign that the house is "Snow's Coffee House and Reading Rooms."

We know that the existing "Crown Inn" in Brewer Street was the house that Dickens had in mind as the haunt of Newman Noggs, and we may visit it as we quickly pass into Golden Square. Thornbury writes :

"The square still lies out of the beaten path, and few Londoners know it, unless business happens to call them in its direction. It has been said of it that it is 'not exactly in anybody's way, to or from anywhere.' Even in the summer time it wears a dull and dingy look, and seems as if it had seen better days. And yet it stands immortalized, not only in Charles Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby*, but in the older and more venerable pages of *Humphrey Clinker*, by Tobias Smollett, whilst the authors of the *Rejected Addresses*, in their imitation of Crabbe, speak of 'Bankrupts from Golden Square and Riches Court.' "

At 41 Beak Street lived Antonio Canal from 1697-1768. The house has "atmosphere" and "odd touches" which tempt one to explore it, and a dark corridor leading into a paved yard at the back is a discovery. At the corner of Marshall Street and Beak Street stands the "Old Coffee House" which breathes the mellowness of ancient days, and should have a history.

In Broad Street is the Lion Brewery, a Dickens's landmark, for we are told that here "In a bygone, faded, tumble-down street lived the Kenwigses, in a house which was perhaps thought dirtier than any of

its neighbours, which exhibited more bell-handles, children, and porter pots, and caught, in all its freshness, the first gust of the thick black smoke that poured forth, night and day, from a large brewery hard by." The brewery still stands as it did in the days of Dickens, and the reader will notice that under its walls runs Hopkins Street connecting Broad Street with Peter Street. William Blake's father kept a hosier's shop in Broad Street, and here the poet was born in 1757. Here, too, after his marriage, in 1784-7, he established himself as a print-seller and engraver. In the latter year he removed into Poland Street, hard by, and after many wanderings he died at Fountain Court, in the Strand, in 1827.

In West Street near Golden Square stands a very ancient inn, "The White Horse." A queer inn, indeed, and a queer street overshadowed by queer, crooked buildings. When night falls here these houses loom out sinister and dramatic. . . . There is an air of something unrevealed in these lurking-places; they seem to be hugging all the dreadful secrets of three hundred years. Note the wooden red-tiled house wedged between the "White Horse" and the dim and sinister-looking doorway of the cutler's shop which displays the sign of the Golden Key. "The White Horse" is the only inn in London which provides a brew known as Swedish Punch. It was originally sold here for the Swedish emigrants who had formed a colony in Golden Square.

CHAPTER XX

THE COPPER KING

MANY years ago I lodged in Hanway Street. The house was a very ancient one and was demolished in 1926 when the dear old Oxford Music Hall was pulled down. I secured the boundary mark from this house in 1926—a lead tablet with 1784 in relief on it. In Hanway Street I met my first celebrity—met him fairly and openly, to talk to him like an equal. I was asked by my landlady if I would like to see the “Copper King.” Thinking that this gentleman was a wealthy mine-owner I expressed my delight and was rather staggered when my landlady gave me a sovereign and asked me if I would go to Vine Street police station and bail him out, as he had been a little concerned in liquor the night before and detained by the police.

I obtained the liberation of the “Copper King” and walked down Piccadilly and through Charing Cross Road home with him. I must say his appearance did surprise me, for, in spite of being a drunkard, he was well-dressed, clean, and sprightly. That drink was his failing I saw in a moment, for his face bore the coarseness and the fierce reactions of heavy drinking, yet he possessed a distinction and an aloofness of bearing that marked him in the crowd, and when he

opened his lips he spoke as a man of decent breeding.

"Sir," said the Copper King to me, walking by my side with his hat in his hand, "your courteous action in seeing me out of this very regrettable situation calls for my most heartfelt thanks. The fact is it was all a mistake . . . a most extraordinary queer set-out. Smoked a couple of Manilla cheroots and felt faint; lost my senses, and came to in Vine Street. They said I was drunk. You can't do battle with the police system. . . . It's a net. If you kick there's no end to it, no way out of it, no sense to it, Nature and the whole universe have to bend when the police get up against you. It's a fact, sir. You would not credit it until you have been caught in the net."

"London," I began. "It's gigantic and unfathomable. It's full of nets and snares."

"Isn't it! You get bewildered. Why the *devil*, my dear fellow, does London make one so infernally ready to drink spirits and smoke strong cigars? In the country, ale and a pipe of tobacco suffices; but in London the taste of a man becomes tigerish. There are scientific explanations, perhaps . . ."

The Copper King stood in the middle of the road (those were the tranquil days of horse traffic) and put his questioning to me with great earnestness.

We arrived at Hanway Street after rambling through a universe of talk, and my friend halted at the "Blue Posts" Tavern.

"Let's have a beaker of ale. Things puzzle me. I must sit down and think. One can think better over ale. I must never get caught in the net again."


He appealed to me with his fine, wicked eyes, and I

felt I could not refuse to take a friendly glass with him. So we became acquainted.

The Copper King occupied two attic rooms at the top of the house in Hanway Street: one was his bedroom, a mere box, the other was his workshop, a spacious and sombre place which contained several large earthenware troughs, galvanic batteries and a quantity of electroplating apparatus.

I remember the Copper King's disquisitions . . . he scattered remarkable discourse over his work-bench as he faked and plated and polished.

"Do you see those rows of old pewter tea-pots, tankards, brass candlesticks, copper tea-urns, and other lumber? Yes, Well, that's what I do for a living—when I'm not drinking or dreaming or pretending that I have never enjoyed a position in society which money could not secure. I cover 'em with a coat of silver and fake 'em, and sell 'em as old Georgian plate. See? There is no man in London who can fake up old copper tea-urns as I can. I coat 'em with silver by electrolysis, tone 'em down and add a few ivory or ebony fittings and there you are. Damned well I do them, and I get a damned good price! I make money easily . . . plenty of it. I am one of those rare mortals, a man who is drinking himself to death and earning a good living at the same time. That's where I get the pull of the common tippler!"

 The Copper King's real name was John Hobson. In the evenings I would often mount to his workshop and drink deep of Hobson's talk which covered theology, philosophy and roguery . . . particularly roguery.

"Boy," said he, "when you have reached the deepest wells of shame and waded waist deep in the muddy waters of degradation as I have, the meaner tricks and shams which would vex the law-abiding citizen become minor virtues."

"Hobson, drink has blunted your conscience," I said. "Besides, why need you cheat for a living? You could earn a handsome income by selling your plated stuff for what it is without representing it to be genuine old silver plate."

"That's just it! Why? It's the artist in me, my boy. That is the only solution I can give. See that ball-shaped urn on Corinthian columns which I have just whitewashed (silver-plated) . . . charming bit o' work with lion's head handles. Well, a dealer has offered me five pounds for that and he *knows* it is a fake. But I won't let him have it. I am keeping that for a pawnbroker at Crouch End who fancies he's a judge of plate, and I shall sell it to him as an authentic specimen. I shall get no more for it. Just a kind of sporting urge in my blood; always dashing into danger and just getting away with it. It has its humorous side too. This pawnbroker once told me 'that he wasn't going to be caught by no fakes.' Those were his words. I remember the 'no' sticking in my throat like a fish-hook. There's not a dealer in London who I haven't deceived with my silver plate. Silver drinking-cups, f'r instance. There's not more than a thousand choice examples in London, two hundred of them are the work of my hands. Collectors will have 'em, and if they do not exist they must be made. It's almost expected. It's a swindle I will

admit, but I'd like to know what sort of trading isn't a swindle in its way. All those patent medicine fellows are just as crooked as I am. They use the front page of *Sun* or the *Globe* to tell their lies . . . selling some common, cheap drugs on the strength of a newspaper puff which says that they are uncommon. It's the modern way ! Everybody does it ! And hang it, young fellow, I do put some genuine stuff into my tankards. The silver marks are not faked ; there's no fraud in them. The other day I paid £10 for ten silver spoons marked with the leopard's head crowned, somewhere near three hundred years old. Romance. Imagination. See ? I cut out the silver marks and splice 'em into the tankards . . . I make the modern drinking-cups respect themselves. And, there you are ! ”

I found out later why Hobson was called the Copper King. Every Friday he attended the Caledonian Market and made a royal progress of the stalls buying up copper and pewter utensils of every variety . . . candlesticks, teapots, tea-urns, salvers, lamps, tankards, porringers. Behind him followed a retinue of urchins who carried his purchases back to Hanway Street as he obtained them. The Copper King was well known to every stallholder in the market, and his dress never varied—a tall silk hat, with a wonderfully wide and curly brim that was not to be seen on common or garden hats, a white waistcoat, morning coat, and splendid patent boots.

The magnificence with which the Copper King walked up and down the avenues of the market would be something difficult to express in human language,

for it was an ingrained simplicity and arrogance, something royally foolish which made the vague legions of the lower classes stare after him without jeering. I suppose it was due to his imbecile unconsciousness of people staring at him that he became a king.

I remember many evenings spent at the "Oxford" with odd old Hobson. . . . These were the days of James Fawn, Herbert Campbell, Marie Lloyd, Harriet Vernon, Dan Ileno, and Tom Wootwell. The prices were as low as sixpence, and you could get in the stalls at half-time for a shilling. The seats had little brackets in front of them to hold "refreshments," and the waiters carried in your orders between the turns. Many of the "turns" afterwards looked in at the "Blue Posts," then a favourite house of call for the variety stage. It still stands at the corner of Hanway Street, and J. T. Smith says, in his *Book for a Rainy Day*, "was once kept by a man of the name of Sturges, deep in the knowledge of chess, upon which game he published a little work, as is acknowledged on his tombstone in St. James's burial-ground, Hampstead Road."

Long ago that delightful little alleyway called Bozier's Court (Boozers Court old Hobson always called it!) was demolished. It was formed by a row of old houses which stood before the pit entrance to the "Oxford." The old "pound" also stood on this spot. Boziers Court was a kind of arcade with tiny shops along it. . . . A warm little place to loiter in on a winter's evening when money did not permit a fire in the "digs"; a place of dim half-tones; a place of surprisals, encounters, escapes. There was a tobacco

shop where one could buy penny packets of tobacco, and a pie shop which dispensed the most alluring hot meat pies (two pence !) and a newspaper shop which was a rendez-vous for bold-eyed girls. Eh, dearie me ! dearie me ! All gone shops, pies, girls and the rest. . . . It makes one feel very lonely. But London soon forgets because it knows that in the scale of things such petty human tokens bulk very small. . . . London's great heart never misses a beat whatever happens :

Kings and comedians all are mortal found,
Cæsar and Pinkethman are under ground.
What's not destroy'd by Time's devouring hand ?
Where's Troy, and where's the May-pole in the Strand ?
Pease, cabbages, and turnips once grew where
Now stands New Bond Street, and a newer square ;

CHAPTER XXI

“CROOKS” AND NOOKS IN PALL MALL

IT is midday in Pall Mall, and business is at high tide. The word “business” fifty years ago would have sounded out of place in speaking of this street of classic fame. But as far back as 1867 Frederick Locker-Lampson noted that the old days of “wit and wealth and wine” were almost forgotten, and that traders were assailing the vicinity. He thus exclaimed

Worse times may come. *Bon ton*, indeed,
Will then be quite forgotten,
And all we much revere will speed
From ripe to worse than rotten :
Let grass then sprout between yon stones,
And owls then roost at Boodle’s.
For Echo will hurl back the tones
Of screaming *Yankee Doodles*.

The poet was nearer to the truth than he knew, for on any midday in the summer months Pall Mall certainly does hurl back the tones of Yankee Doodles. You are here in the American banking region which shows a remarkable gathering together of banks of world-wide character. Here is Brown Shipley’s Bank ; an old English concern which is the mecca of the rich American visitors. In the Haymarket is the American Express Company, which issues Inter-

national Cheques which are accepted as readily as Bank of England notes all over the world. Hambros in Cockspur Street are the Norwegian Bankers ; the Cr dit Lyonnais in Charles Street provides funds for French visitors ; the Guaranty Trust Company of New York and the Farmers' Loan and Trust Company are two other American concerns. Every other building is a Travel Bureau, a Bank, or a Shipping Office. Americans wander about here with fat wads of bank notes, and where such things are to be found, you will find the " crooked brigade."

Pall Mall swarms with crooks . . . they have become much more subtle since 1914. We have the ex-officer crook who has learned something in the army. He gave out cheques on his overdrawn account during the war, and later he turned his attention to frauds of a much more serious nature. There are a fair number of South Americans and Greeks at the game too. After all, it is an easy way of getting a living . . . until Scotland Yard claims you. Their choice of this region is easy to understand. Every other building is a Travel Bureau, a Bank or a Shipping Office. Americans and rich visitors from all over the world wander about here with thick wads of bank notes. Nature, as anyone in close touch with her methods would guess, does not produce simple colonials and Americans with fat banking accounts without also producing predatory individuals to devour them, and thus we discover that the crooks are very strongly represented in this West End banking region.

A cashier in a London bank must never drop his " awareness " for a second. Every trick and dodge

it is possible to think of is tried out on him by our friend the "crook."

Forged cheques are the most usual instruments used by the crook, and they can be divided into many sections. The most dangerous to the bank cashier is the genuine cheque which has been stolen from a letter box and raised in amount ; say a cheque for £5 altered to £50. The forger takes the crossing out with acid, cleverly making an alteration in the "wording" and figures, and sends his runner to get it cashed over the counter. The reader will very properly question why the cashier does not "spot" the alterations. This is almost impossible, because when the forger has faked the words and figures, he proceeds to go over all the writing on the cheque with *dead black ink*. The date, wording, signature, and figures are all ingeniously re-traced with a very fine pen, and executed with such delicacy that after the ink is dry all alterations are invisible. A Scotland Yard Officer said to me "beware of the cheque drawn in dead black ink, for that is the forger's trade mark."

Nearly all the faked cheques which I have inspected in the "Yard" museum are in the same tell-tale ebony handwriting.

The cheque which is a forgery throughout is the next most dangerous trap for the cashier, and a passable imitation stands a good chance of being paid. If the cashier is "rushed" by a crowd waiting at his counter and the money is "good" in the account, the "crook" is likely to be lucky. The cashier has passed thousands of cheques that day and one "dud" happens along. It is a perfect forgery, is correctly

drawn, and the drawer has the funds to meet it. That's enough for any cashier to say grace over!

How does the forger obtain the information to enable him to forge and utter his cheque? An easy matter enough. Most of the "foreign banks" in the West End have their travellers' waiting-rooms where newspapers, writing paper, and other requisites are provided for their customers. In the summer months these rooms are always crowded with Americans and other visitors. It is impossible to question all who use a bank waiting-room, and any swindler with a polished man-of-affairs' air, has only to spend an hour in such a place to pick up enough information to keep him busy plundering "suckers" for a month. He sees the customers make out their cheques, draw their money, and obligingly return and count it for his benefit. He overhears them telling each other their addresses at London hotels; where they will spend their evenings, and the shops at which they are making purchases. All very useful information. Then our friend the "crook" casually picks up a new piece of blotting paper, which has just been used by an account holder to blot his cheque, and walks out. The impression on the blotting paper supplies him with a perfect model to work on, and if he has been lucky enough to obtain a blank cheque from the bank, his task of forging is not very difficult. The forger does not turn up to cash the cheque, but gives it to a hotel porter or some tradesman to cash for him. He follows at a discreet distance and waits outside the bank or peers through the glass door. He can quickly decide if the cashier is paying or not; and is able to act accordingly.

The spurious bank notes prepared for the trapping of the unwary bank cashier are great in number and extensive in variety. A certain clever French trickster is well known to most of the London banks; he carries a stock of 100-franc notes which are very creditable forgeries reproduced by photogravure. With every "dud" note he places two or three good ones, and obtains English money in exchange for them. The English money is used to purchase more genuine franc notes for "decoy ducks," and thus he merrily proceeds to play Midas amongst the bank clerks.

The \$1000 American bank note is frequently forged. The usual test for the genuineness is the delicate "silk threads" which is woven into the paper. Other dud U.S.A. \$1000 and \$500 notes are made by faking and partly reprinting genuine \$100 and \$50 notes.

Some months ago a lady presented some dollar bills at my grille to exchange for English money, and as bad notes were flying about, I asked her if she could identify herself. She said, "I can sing you a bar or two of 'Home Sweet Home' if you think that will help matters." On a second glance I saw the lady was Dame Melba! Since that time Melba has often "chipped" me about suspecting her of being a lady "crook," and whenever she pays me a business visit she advances in a state of aggressive sprightliness with a cry of "Hands up." I have never yet seen Melba serious. She is a great humorist and must have been born with a disposition to gentle skylarking . . . she makes fun of everybody and everything, including herself.

Melba uses the quaintest cheques I have ever seen. They are very small and specially made for her. Each cheque is folded four times, the whole book fitting into a gold case which looks small in the palm of her hand.

It is a curious thing that no passable forgeries of the Bank of England notes ever get into circulation. There is a brisk crispness about the paper they are printed on that seems to defy the forger. It is not the print which baffles the maker of spurious notes ; it is the paper. Most cashiers tell a good note by the " feel " of it. There are several secret marks on the Bank of England notes. In the £5 note the " i " in the word five has a white nick running into the black background ; it is just to be discovered with the naked eye, but it is always there. In the £10 note the " e " of the ten has a similar nick. Nine people out of ten could not say how the word " company " on our bank notes is written. Look at a note and you will read " For the Gov^t and Comp^a of the Bank of England." Comp^a is the shortening of the word used by the old Lombardy bankers. Two secret marks are contained in these words—a three-cornered dot under the " a " of " Comp^a " and a curious little cleft in the " f " of " of."

In the £10 note it will be noticed that there is an " f " with a looped tail and an " f " with a cleft in the same sentence. Most of the secrets about the " paper " of the notes are hidden in the Bank of England archives. Many years ago the Bank engraved and issued two notes for £100,000 each, and two for £50,000. I was told by an aged cashier of a famous private bank that

he remembered a butcher who had amassed an immense fortune walking into his bank with one of these £50,000 notes, asking the loan of £5,000, and wishing to deposit the big note as security in the banker's hands, saying that he had kept it for years. The £5,000 were at once handed over, but the cashier hinted at the same time to the butcher the folly of hoarding such a sum and losing the interest. "Werry true, sir," replied the butcher, "but I likes the look on't so werry well that I keeps t'other one of the same kind at home."

Writing of the Bank of England reminds me that I worked as a junior under the present Governor—the Hon. Montagu Collet Norman—a kindly, charming man, who, when he learned that I was interested in literature, took a keen delight in cornering me with out-of-the-way questioning about books. I carried one of my early perpetrations—a book on Rudyard Kipling—to him. Looking at me with those rather troubled, dark eyes of his, he said, "You are a writer, Hopkins . . . but are you a reader? That is the question." I assured him that I had read deeply.

With his back to the fire and his thumbs stuck in the armholes of his waistcoat, he demanded in his "absently," attentive way what I thought of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

I smiled faintly.

"And the other Burton who gave us that magnificent version of the *Kasîdah*."

My smile could not conceal my ignorance. Norman's silence was significant . . . almost aggressive. But I read those two books.

Men in high positions are often shy, and to this rule Mr. Norman is not an exception. It is impossible to get a photograph of him, and wild horses could not drag him to a public dinner. To a Society lady who begged him to say something at a public meeting on behalf of orphans, he wrote: "I would rather turn up and bath your orphans than speak about them to an audience."

He is a man of enormous vitality, constant restlessness, and whimsical impulses. His dress is in distinct contradiction to his gloomy eyes and tall, silent figure, for he wears free-and-easy clothes that suggest the open air. Meet him in a country town and one would write him down "gentleman farmer" without hesitation. He wears the low "poet's" collar, black and white plaid trousers and, in summer, a wonderful grey top hat, balanced at a perilous angle at the back of his head. But his speech, curiously distinctive and striking, marks him out from other men. His voice is soft and fluid, and he seems to get more significance out of a single word than a *raconteur* can get out of a story.

He is a banker with a sense of humour, too, and that is a phenomenon. Some time ago he was sauntering about the bank when his attention was arrested by a new junior clerk, who, of course, was not aware that he was the Governor. He asked him a string of questions about his work, most of which the boy ignored or answered in a very impatient manner. Mr. Norman could see that it would not take much longer for the boy to tell him to "get off to his own job," and not wishing to part without making himself

known he picked up a cheque and said, "Now, suppose I endorsed this with my name, Montagu Collet Norman . . ." Collapse of the junior!

I should here like to pause for a few remarks on our American visitors. The American attitude towards the dollar is without parallel or equal and beyond the imaginative conception of Jules Verne and Louis de Rougemont. All good Americans when they arrive in London expect to see everything in the shops marked in dollars and the shopkeepers on their knees pleading to be paid in U.S.A. currency instead of English pounds. They imagine that after the war we scrapped Bank of England notes and traded only in dollars. Nine Americans out of ten call American notes "real money" . . . they call them real money swaggeringly and with great nasal emphasis on the "real" when they are in an English bank. They also imagine that the dollar is worth about 5s. in England instead of 4s. 1½d. The result is that they receive a rude shock when they change their first "real" money in London. They mutter that the English banks are out "robbing" American visitors; forgetting the fact that when the poor little French franc stood at 175 they simply walked over each others heads to make capital out of a brave nation's misfortune.

An American lady brought five real golden sovereigns all the way from the U.S.A. for me to see. It was real good of her, but I found that, besides giving me a treat by exhibiting my country's lost gold, she had other ideas. As she took the golden "quids" out of a piece of tissue paper she asked me how many

extra pound notes she would get when she changed them. Oh boy!

Even American children are trained in the great game of "cent snatching." You may see them with their little pocket books walking from bank to bank in Pall Mall to find which will bid highest for a \$1 note. . . .

St. James's Square was once the most fashionable square in London; it has still a quiet charm and dignity which takes one back a hundred years at a step. Note the guns (lamp-posts) outside No. 2, once Admiral Boscawen's residence. On the north is No. 10 (observe the old link extinguishers), which has been tenanted by three Premiers, and the Sports Club. On the west is the East India United Service Club.

At the St. James's Palace end of Pall Mall is a little-known thoroughfare called Crown Court, which cuts the corner buildings of St. James's Street into an oblong block. Few people know of the existence of this court with its medley of eighteenth-century shops, and its overhead display of signboards and jutting lamps. Here is one of London's old-world ale-houses, "The Red Lion." The two carved lions' heads projecting from the front of the inn are curious. The building must be some hundred or so years old, and there is a proviso in the deeds of the property in which it is laid down that the landlord must keep the garden and sheds in *front of the house* tidy at his own expense. The little court has been innocent of any garden cultivation for the last hundred years—probably longer. Messrs. Lock and Co., the hatters, have



BERRY'S "COFFEE MILL"



LOCK'S HAT SHOP

their back entrance in Crown Court, and the dark, shuttered rooms are much the same as they were in the reign of George III.

We pass out of Crown Court into King Street, and turn into St. James's Street. No. 3 is a remarkable old shop where Messrs. Berry, the wine merchants, carry on their business. It is worth while to buy a "bottle of something" for the sake of looking closely over the shop's interior. There is a collection of leather wine-flasks and early bottles, and a pair of great beam-scales inside. Here you can get weighed and have your weight recorded just as the Prince Regent, Charles Lamb, and Lord Nelson did in their days. The front of Berry Bros. has been sketched by many artists, and there is a delicate charm about the two fan-shaped windows. However, the shop front of Messrs. Lock and Co., the hatters at No. 6, is of a greater age, and is probably the finest example of its kind in London. The windows project and are supported by iron railings, and the doors (one with a curious lion's mask knocker) are in their original state.

There is a painting of Berry's shop in the London Museum, and it states that wine was sold here in the reign of Queen Anne. The old sign over the door is a "Coffee Mill," a name by which the shop is known to most of the residents in the adjacent houses. By the side of the Coffee Mill is a dark, oak-lined passage that leads to Pickering Place, a small square paved with irregular stone flags and surrounded by half a dozen fine old houses. The tiny square is a queer little place, and in the centre there stands a sun-dial bearing the inscription, "WILLIAM PICKERING,

FOUNDATOR, 1710." In the old days this was a favourite retreat for those who settled quarrels with swords. The duellists generally came from the notorious gambling clubs of St. James's Street and Pall Mall.

Pickering Place takes its name from the founder of Berry's business, a certain Mr. Pickering who started a coffee store here. The scales mentioned above were once used to weigh the coffee bags. The shop has a Queen Anne front, but inside the floorbeams suggest that it is of the Tudor period. Before Pickering opened his coffee shop the building was an Italian warehouse and one of the first tobacco stores in London.

At No. 64 St. James's Street is the famous Cocoa Tree Club, and here also is Blue Ball Yard in which may be seen some queer little stables.

Wishart's tobacco shop at 35 Panton Street is an extremely old business, and still retains the original sign of the "Highlander Thistle and Crown" on its windows. Wishart's shop was located in Coventry Street up to 1880, after which they moved to 41 Haymarket. These premises were required by the Piccadilly Tube, and the business then moved to their present address. Mr. J. Larwood humorously remarks in his *History of Sign-boards* :

"Since the Highlander's love of snuff and whisky was such that he wished to have a Ben Lomond of the former and a Loch Lomond of the latter, nobody could make a better public-house sign than the 'Highland Laddie,' nor a better sign for a snuff-shop than the kilted Highlander, who generally stands guard at the door of these establishments."

The following skit appeared shortly after the Rebellion of 1745, when every effort was made to suppress the nationality of the Scots, down to their ballads and their kilts :—

"We hear that the dapper wooden Highlanders who so heroically guard the doors of snuff-shops intend to petition the Legislature in order that they may be excused from complying with the Act of Parliament with respect to the change of dress, alleging that they have ever been faithful subjects to His Majesty, having constantly supplied his guards with a pinch out of their mulls when they marched by ; and so far from engaging in any rebellion, they have never entertained a rebellious thought whence they humbly hope that they shall not be put to the expense of buying new clothes."

David Wishart was the originator of the Highland figure which was once such a familiar object outside tobacconists' shops, and his sign bore significance to the cause of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, the younger Pretender. He placed a wooden Highlander outside his shop to denote that it was a Jacobite rendez-vous. Prince Charles visited Wishart's shop on various occasions between 1750 and 1760.

I remember when I was at University College in 1900 a fine Highland figure stood in the front of a tobacconist's opposite the establishment of Messrs. Shoolbred in Tottenham Court Road. It was our mascot, and we seized it on any occasion when we considered a "rag" was necessary. I remember we introduced the old Highlander to Queen Victoria as she drove down Tottenham Court Road one after-

noon. We were a noisy crew, and must have astonished the dear old lady. She was in an open barouche without guards of any description, and it was a picture I shall always keep in my memory ; the coachmen and the attendant on the back seat sitting very erect and the Queen sitting so still that she seemed like a faded photograph from an album. I still can see the students from King's College and University College, crowd against crowd, like the wind meeting the tide, fighting for the honour of introducing Phineas (as the battered figure was called) to the Queen. . . . I can still see the Queen's look of amazement when Phineas popped up at the side of her barouche.

It was quite a gag at University College to refer the fellow who asked you for a loan of money to a benevolent old Scotsman in the Tottenham Court Road. "He is sure to lend you a quid if you tackle him gently," the novice was informed, and it was not till he arrived at the shop indicated, and met the wooden stare of Phineas, that the hoax became apparent.

On the ground where Northumberland Avenue, Charing Cross, and Great Scotland Yard forms a triangle there is a quiet and secluded spot called Craig's Court. It is entered by a passage at No. 16 Charing Cross, formerly Cox's Bank. It was to No. 2 Craig's Court that the founder of the Bank, Richard Cox, moved his business in 1765. Situated on the east side of the Court is the historical Queen Anne Mansion known as Harrington House, which contains the original staircase, a Grinling Gibbons chimney-piece, and several Adam fireplaces.

Back to the "Square" again we turn up Cockspur

Street, thread Haymarket and turn up Piccadilly as far as the Burlington Arcade, a long, covered way sacred to cigar merchants, hosiers, and bootmakers. Here is Ward's well-known old "segar house," established in 1819. Walk in and ask the kindly manager, Mr. Reed, to show you the ledgers which show bookings out of cigars to be sent by mail coach to all parts of the country from the Gloucester Coffee House, Piccadilly. Ward's sold the first cigarettes in London, and they were made for the officers who returned from the Crimean War, 1855-1856. Turkish cigarettes had gained such a popularity amongst our troops during the dreadful cholera scourge at Varna that they were soon demanded everywhere in England. Ward's low-ceilinged shop is, of course, the original building of 1819.

While we are so close we might turn into Vine Street and visit the "Man-in-the-Moon" Inn. This house has a sign with a biblical origin, and must be one of the oldest inn survivals in London. Antiquaries tell us the sign represents either Cain or Jacob, or the man who was stoned for gathering sticks on the Jewish Sabbath (Numbers xv. 22, etc.), and is so old as to be alluded to by Shakespeare and Dante. There were other houses bearing this sign in Cheapside and other parts of London. Inside the tavern is a very fine painting of two Bank of England notes, and some sporting papers and handbooks of about a hundred years ago; also an engraving of the sign of the "Mischief Inn," which formerly existed in Oxford Street. The sign by Hogarth shows a man supporting a drunken woman, a monkey, and a magpie on his

shoulders. He points to the padlock of wedlock which is chained around his neck, and warns all and sundry against the strife of matrimony.

Facing Hyde Park Gate is the noble howitzer-crowned memorial to the Royal Artillery. This, and Rudyard Kipling's story of the guns, *The Janeites*, will for ever keep green the heroism and glamour of the "'Eavies." Those who pass the Artillery Memorial without feeling some small wave of emotion do not wish to see it . . . dare not look at it . . . the starred and bib-and-tucker brigade pass such landmarks of the dead with eyes averted. . . . Read Kipling's story first, and then take a good look at the memorial—you will learn quite a lot of things which you have not noticed before. You will see through the camouflage—screens carved in stone, the motor-bike "runner" of Kipling's story come hurtling overhead and land with "one awful wop" on the guns. Kipling, by the way, is at fault in calling a motor-cyclist a "runner." I served as a motor-cyclist from first to last in the war, and was never so called. Jagers has included in the stone carvings of the memorial some of the soldiers' intimate utensils. We see the mess-tin, knife, fork, and spoon, but miss our old friends razor, comforter (cap), button-stick, and toothbrush. However, here is perpetuated the army rum-jar. Friend, to your own memories! Review, rehandle, recall that jolly little squat stone jar which bore the magic symbol S.R.D., and which contained the magic fluid which seldom seemed to get past a Q.M.S. Retaste that liquid honey and fire which turned the icy squidgy mud in your boots to warm treacle and set the song-thrush singing

in your heart ! The letters S.R.D. may mean little to most of us, but it holds one of the minor secrets of the war. S.R.D. meant No. 1 Supply Reserved Depot, Deptford . . . S.R.D. meant a long line of electric cranes working day and night, never ceasing, feeding the supply steamers which maintained the huge food dumps in France. S.R.D. meant petrol and bully, biscuits and tinned milk ; four miles of stores in the Foreign Cattle Market at the river end of High Street, Deptford. Few people guessed that such a depot existed, but most of the food for our troops was handled there. The German airmen knew the depot well, and once I remember they dropped an incendiary bomb on our petrol dump and got it well alight. Many deeds of quiet heroism were performed at that dreadful blaze, but the story of it was never made public, this being the only printed reference.

I have not visited No. 1 S.R.D. since the war, yet I have always promised myself a tour of inspection of the Royal Victualling Yard and the Market, for many of the sheds and storehouses are very ancient, being survivals of the Royal Dock, or "King's Yard," where the "wooden walls of Old England" were built, repaired, and fitted out for some hundreds of years.

During a short spell of duty as a M.C. Dispatch Rider at this depot my sleeping-place was a sail and rigging loft which had certainly stood there since the days when John Evelyn lived at Saye's Court and Samuel Pepys was one of the principal officers of the King's Yard. I was told that Peter the Great worked in this very loft, learning the art of sail-making and

spinning hemp. In 1872, by order of the City officials, a board was put up in the Foreign Cattle Market bearing the following inscription :—" Here worked as a ship-carpenter Peter, Czar of all the Russians, afterwards Peter the Great, 1698." I did not see this board during the war, but I was told that it still existed in one of the storehouses on the riverside.

John Evelyn let his house at Saye's Court to Peter the Great during the time the prince was employed in acquiring information on matters connected with naval architecture from the commissioner and surveyor of the navy, Sir Anthony Deane, who, next after the Marquis of Carmarthen, was his most intimate English acquaintance.

Peter was a strange fellow . . . a great wayward, burning man ; full of fun and wild spirits. His favourite liquor was brandy laced with red pepper, and the evenings at Saye's Court were hectic, for it was not an out-of-the-way event for Peter and his whole suite to be put to bed most phenomenally tight. After these bouts the usual morning " head " was Peter's portion and he employed a unique method of working off the last night's legacy. In Evelyn's most " boscaresque " garden was a noble holly hedge. It was the apple of Evelyn's eye . . . a benediction of a hedge . . . a majestic hedge. In a word it was a triumph of boscase.

Peter, who did not possess the woven-in gardener's reverence for such a thing, used it as a tilting-fence. When the prince awoke, feeling a little " blue," he took a heavy wheelbarrow and proceeded to dash it backwards and forwards through Evelyn's favourite

hedge until the exercise induced a fresh measure of healthiness. The reader will find an allusion to Peter's hedge sacrilege in Evelyn's *Sylvia*, where he asks :

“Is there under the heavens a more glorious and refreshing object, of the kind, than an impregnable hedge, of about four hundred feet in length, nine feet high, and five in diameter, which I can still show in my ruined garden at Saye's Court (thanks to the Czar of Muscovy) at any time of the year, glittering with its armed and variegated leaves ; the taller standards, at orderly distances, blushing with their natural coral ? It mocks the rudest assaults of the weather, *beasts*, or *hedge-breakers*.”

The S.R.D. on a rum jar has lured me far from my course. I must leave the rest of Deptford's history in the ink pot, and take seven-league boots back to Hyde Park. Where the Albert Gate now stands was the “Fox and Bull” Tavern, to which the bodies of people drowned in the Serpentine were taken. This lake was a favourite place for suicides. Here Harriet Westbrook, the unhappy first wife of the poet Shelley, drowned herself in December, 1816.

CHAPTER XXII

EAST MEETS WEST IN CHINATOWN

ALDGATE Pump, with its wolf's head spout and "tail" handle, a reminder of the last wolf killed in London, is the first outpost of Oriental London. A 'bus from this point will take you along the Commercial Road to Burdett Road, and just round the corner Chinatown bursts dramatically upon you. I do not mean that Limehouse Causeway bursts upon you, for, in truth, it cannot be said to be more impressive than any other street in the district. It is a narrow, dark, damp-looking thoroughfare. But what marks the street at once are its coloured denizens—Chinese, Japanese, Berbers, Arabs, Malays, Zanzibaris, and Lascars.

Certainly the Chinese are not an agreeable-looking race. They stand in knots, the pale yellowish Chinamen from Peking, who almost trail their pigtaails, and those from Canton and Hong Kong, who carefully cover their pigtaails with golf caps. Standing at the doors of shops Chinese children may be seen, and you may note the pigtaails in their earliest stages. On children they are the prettiest hair-dressing one could wish for, being fine brown and very crisp, and bound at the end with red silk. As Rudyard Kipling once remarked, "An infant pigtail is just like the first tender sprout of a tulip bulb."

On the Causeway are the shop windows of Chinatown. I linger long before a Chinese grocer's shop. Rare delicacies are displayed—wooden kegs of soy sauce, curries, gingers, medicines, drugs, Chinese tobacco, and pills from Canton for counteracting the evil effects of opium. Here are bars of soap, stamped Leong-Hip; oil made of beans to feed the sacred lamps; long red and gold packets of joss sticks, tins of water-lily roots, and small chests of OO Loong tea. Over another shop one reads "San Sam Sing," and finds that here may be bought tea and ornaments.

A yellow image of a shopman beckoned me in.

"You wanchee buy? Plitty things here," said he.

Each thing he produced was quaint and striking. The Chinese have an inherent sense of form and colour; they make their objects of common use simply and beautifully. There was a quiet satisfaction of the eye in this shop filled with stirring sticks, chop sticks, bowls, baskets, and even pressed carcasses of ducks and pigeons!

I purchased a tiny china grotesque of a small baby pulling a monkey by the tail—the whole story of the angry monkey and the delighted baby in a few simple curves. The shopman daintily painted my purchase in his "sales" book, and one character enumerated the object, date, and price.

Notices in Chinese are painted over many shops, and should you be learned enough to decipher them you would read "Wo Foug—Prosperity by Honesty," or "San Sing for Righteous Honesty."

If you look for extravagance of colour, for flaming

shop-fronts, for gilded balconies and overhanging façades of vermilion and green, you will find none of these things in the small alleys of Limehouse. Long, long ago the sad fogs of Limehouse ousted the gorgeous colours of the Orient. Every scheme of colouring depends on the power of the sun above, and that is why the Chinese living in London fogs have exchanged lapis lazuli and vermilion for dark green and nondescript brown.

I plunged into Limehouse Causeway, which is hardly an arm's stretch wide. The bleary-eyed buildings totter and lean with age. The first impression is that all the houses have been condemned and stand vacant. Nearly every window is shuttered or cross-boarded. These houses, damp and gloomy as sea-caves, are Oriental lodging-houses. The light never penetrates to the rooms, for the shutters are always up and barred. The Orientals, with their cat-like tread, pass in and out, and the shut-up shop, round which are beds and divans, is a delightful retreat from the Oriental point of view; the half-darkness, being grateful to the eyes and restful to the nerves, induces that delightful sensation called *Keyf*.

They carry with them their own bedding and their prayer rugs. Many of them smuggle through supplies of *hasheesh* and *bhong* to chew, drugs which often drive them raving mad.

Suddenly from a beetle-browed doorway a Franco-Chinese girl fluttered from one house to another. Her frock was silk, her lips were crimsoned, and her black slanting eyes were like deep black pools. Even in the dim light I could see that she was marvellously lovely

—audacious, challenging, mysterious. It was almost impossible to connect such grace and beauty with the miserable hovels of Limehouse. Possibly she was the wife of a Chinese lodging-house keeper ; it is said that some of them have amassed small fortunes.

The visitor from overseas will be amazed at the number of white girls who lodge in the Chinese houses. Many of them are married to Chinese, and seem to be quite happy. Of course, to the average Englishman this state of affairs excites nothing but horror ; but facts must be faced. Their children look healthier and happier than the other slum children, and most of them are very nice-looking.

A few minutes later I made my way into "Charlie Brown's," just outside the West India Dock. This is a great meeting-place for the men of the mercantile marine, and Charlie Brown, the landlord, is a sort of international godfather to some thousands of sailormen on all the Seven Seas. The chance dropper-in at this inn will effect the utmost surprise at his environment, for on every inch of wall space and suspended from the ceiling are stuffed creatures, Chinese gods, and war relics from all parts of the world. Here you will meet many members of the nondescript Oriental population of Limehouse. There is the insinuating carpet hawker from Jerusalem. There is the Kohl vendor from Egypt, who goes to the houses of the Jews, and who will pluck the eyebrows and darken the eyelids so as to give intense lustre to the eyes. There is the Japanese tattooer who earns his ten guineas in two or three days. There is the Syrian orange dealer, who also drives a secret trade in

hasheesh cigarettes—each of them can be seen at sometime in “Charlie Brown’s.”

Pass through Limehouse Causeway and near Duke Shore Wharf is an unquestionable Dickens’s inn, “The Grapes,” which figures in *Our Mutual Friend* as “The Six Jolly Fellowship Porters.” This snug retreat, rising sheer from the river front, looks down on Limehouse Reach. You walk straight through a narrow passage and you find yourself in a cabin-like room with an outside balcony leading down to a small shipbuilder’s yard. The back of the inn is very picturesque with its projecting club room and full-bellied windows. A still more striking little house once stood next to “The Bunch of Grapes” some years ago, and with its demolition another link with the leisurely life of our forebears was irretrievably broken. It was the Limehouse harbour-master’s house, and here he trained a fine grape vine, grew roses, and made his calls in a rowing-boat. To-day the harbour-master of Limehouse wears much gold lace and patrols the Reach in an imposing motor-launch.

CHAPTER XXIII

LITTLE GOD SHAKER

THE other day I was standing behind the grille at Moorshed's Bank, at which place I officiate as cashier, when suddenly the light of heaven flickered and darkened, and one entered the archway before me. He almost filled the vestibule, and I recognized my old friend Cecil Palmer. It occurred to me that when my publisher takes the trouble to beard me in my den he may conceivably meditate murder or robbery. For that reason I made no sign, and retreated behind my partition. But a total eclipse which followed a moment later drew me in amazement to my grille once more and I beheld a second inquisitor utterly blocking up the arch—the giantlike figure of Aubrey Hammond, huge of beam, and the immaculate perspective of power.

"Hallo!" said Cecil. "Come out of that mouse trap of yours. We are going to take you out."

"If you propose that we three should embrace a Robin Hood career around all the haunts from here to Ludgate Hill . . ." I began.

Aubrey Hammond lifted his head and looked over the five-foot partition.

"I'll pull you over the top if you don't hurry up."

The Demon of Pure Irresponsibility bade me follow

Gog and Magog out into Pall Mall, and for some hundreds of yards I was cannoned and bounced all-whither between them like a rowing boat escorted by two battleships.

We halted in Cockspur Street, just at the side of Dent's watch shop.

"Where's the alleged author?" said Cecil Palmer, turning round, and catapulting me with his *arrière-pensée* clean in the middle of Aubrey Hammond.

"This," said Hammond, who received my cannon off C.P. as a mountain would receive a fly, "this is where you come in. I have found you a little wafer of unknown London for this book of yours. I now propose to introduce you to the Little God Shaker in his indigenous den. Valuable copy for you, my dear fellow. . . . Follow me up . . . this way."

We climbed up into the warm inwards of Cunard House, and at last came to the shrine of Little God Shaker, which I discovered was the private cocktail bar in the offices of Canadian Club Whiskey. I was introduced jointly to the local deity—a devilish little cocktail shaker, with a winking, jolly look about its alcoholic paunch—and our host, Major Thompson. I opened my eyes to a room rich with piquant decorations from the brush of Aubrey Hammond. The walls, bars, doors and ceiling held a scroll-picture of the greatest geographical interest . . . hustled topography . . . potted travel. . . .

You walk up the moonlit Montmartre and cannon into a reveller in flowing cloak and almost stumble over an amorous pussy-cat of rare device. The lamp-posts of the street are almost real, and the lamps are

truly so, bulging out of the wall-panels with faceted frames holding electric lights. There is a little dark archway which leads to a café—Cecil Palmer wanted to drop in for a tall glass of lager, and as he might have broken through the painted scenery, and dropped sheer into a room of thirty-nine lady clerks below, with disastrous results, I held on to him. However, I stray. Back to Montmartre and across to the skyscrapers of New York, and on to Nice which holds the shrine of Shaker the Cocktail God. Here is the altar with Shaker smirking and waiting with bibulous anticipation for Whiskey, Maraschino, Curraco and the rest of his cosmopolitan courtiers to hold high revel with him. He positively chuckled with delight when the High-Priest (Major Thompson) picked him up and poured various spirits into his little nickel-plated maw. In the ceiling above Nice shines a painted sun glowing with electric light, which strikes the glasses and bottles beneath to living, leaping gold . . . the authentic sun of the Riviera. One can hardly credit it is all just painted canvas. I thought of the Japanese houses constructed chiefly of paper partitions, and the story of the Jap cracksman who burgled the Royal Palace with a pair of scissors and stole the Princess's pale pink pyjamas. I speculated that in the land of the Rising Sun, Aubrey Hammond could practise as artist, architect and builder combined. . . .

But listen! What is that sibilant chuckle from the shrine beneath the sun. It is Shaker being severely shaken; he is enjoying his daily potations. The glasses nod and jingle and the bottles stand at strict attention. We, the unholy trinity, await the end of

the rites with expressions (I imagine) which must exhibit shades of awe not unmixed with bright curiosity.

At last Shaker's head-gear is removed, and his "spirits" are poured into glasses, while he, the deposed god, is cast aside in a corner. Author, artist, publisher and merchant gather around the shrine and clink glasses . . . they clink them once or twice. . . .

Little God Shaker, hears the familiar liturgy . . . "here's luck," and "all the best" and gets up in response, but the special blend of Canadian Club Rye has been too much for him, and he subsides in well-matured, richly lacquered incapacity. He has fallen from his high austerity . . . the barb and toxin of things worldly has robbed him of his divinity. He is a god no longer. . . . Fie upon him! He is none the better for what he has taken. . . . He is "shot away," tight, completely canned. It is high time that three respectable gentlemen abandoned his Temple, and left Shaker to remorse and an after-morning thirst. We dismount from our high stools and make our way back to Paris, *via* the backwoods of Canada, and thence out into Pall Mall where an October fog thickens and twirls around the Nelson Column burying the great city a thousand fathoms deep in gulfs of pearl-grey vapour.

CHAPTER XXIV

TAIL-PIECE

GOD made the country ; Man made the town ; but the Devil hatched the suburbs. This is a saying that few will not endorse, and man's share in the architecture is not perfect. We must all go back to Nature in the end. As youth fades, we begin to weary of the brawling market-places and the pursuit of pleasure ; our outlook grows a little more mellow . . . a little more melancholy and autumnal ; having tasted all potent waters and proved all things ; having paid the priceless tribute of enthusiasm at the shrine of many a saint and philosopher, we look upon London as the foreground of the picture, and begin to collect our valued treasures—creeds and ideals and philosophies and dreams—and to tramp out to the more enduring wonders of Nature.

Yes, London after all is only a temporary foreground . . . little more than a painted drop-scene before the marshland and wattled huts of a thousand years ago. It is not possible to forget how the author of the one hundred and third Psalm wrote : " As for man, his days are as grass : as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone ; and the place thereof shall know it no more."

The picture of London in the morning of the world is a persuasive symbol. That picture requires little imagination to conjure back again . . . just the great primitive Thames without its embankments and the marshlands running out to fields and shadowy forests. Such a picture dimly hints not only of all our squandered devotion, wasted toil, and futile courage, but also of the frantic folly and the blood and sweat that shall be. The Thames suggests what may be the nature of London's end. London may topple and crumble in the jaws of some mighty volcanic convulsion ; she may be blasted and blighted with falling fire from the highway of the stars ; she may be wiped out by the machines of some foreign army ; she may end in a magnificent clamour and flare consistent with the grandeur of her position and past : but such a consummation, however fitting, is not probable. I rather think that London will dwindle back through the ages ; she will fall back in stages . . . back to the Stuart period ; then the Tudors and the Middle Ages . . . retiring on the three Edwards and passing to Henry III and Henry II ; then back to the Norman kings and Saxon England, finally giving way to forest with swamp and solitude. Such a final scene is hardly in line with Mr. Wells's idea of automatic progress and the perfection of the world by machinery, but after the Great War we cannot expect too much from civilization. Already we see that we can spend five hundred years on the perfection of medicine and surgery only to find that poison gas and the bombing aeroplane have arrived to stay. In other words every scientific victory brings to the world some kind of cold and

devilish practice, and it seems that man cannot be trusted to live happily amongst all the marvellous playthings he has evolved. In the end he will become tired of these playthings, and I can imagine the last Londoners going back to the groves for their worship, and chanting their songs of sorrow and joy under aisles unbuilt by human hands. I can imagine the Thames rolling free once more, throwing off the foul stains of factory and gas works, and giving again to those who are spared a measure of beneficence which will surpass all the charity of man's boasted social development.

So at the end of this London pilgrimage we may well return at last to the river and the bridges. It is from the bridges that London shows up in a thousand noble views and expressions—whether by night or day, whether seen from Westminster, Blackfriars, Southwark, Hungerford Foot-Bridge, London Bridge, or Tower Bridge. There is a passage in Wells's *Tony Bungay* which expresses the noble aspect of the Thames with a grave sweeping eloquence:

“Blackfriars one takes—just under these two bridges and just between them is the finest bridge monument in the world—and, behold, soaring up, hanging in the sky over a rude tumult of warehouses, over a jostling competition of traders, irrelevantly beautiful and altogether remote, Saint Paul's! ‘Of course!’ one says, ‘Saint Paul's!’ It is the very figure of whatever fineness the old Anglican culture achieved, detached, a more dignified and chastened Saint Peter's, colder, greyer, but still ornate; it has never been overthrown, never



BILLINGSGATE—LANDING THE FISH
(From a drawing made by Gustave Doré)

disavowed, only the tall warehouses and all the roar of traffic have forgotten it ; the steamships, the barges go heedlessly by regardless of it, intricacies of telephone wires and poles cut blackly into its thin mysteries and presently, when in a moment the traffic permits you and you look round for it, it has dissolved like a cloud in the grey blues of the London sky.

“ Comes London Bridge, and the great warehouses tower up about you waving stupendous cranes, the gulls circle and scream in your ears, large ships lie among their lighters, and one is in the port of the world. Again and again in this book I have written of England as a feudal scheme overtaken by fatty degeneration and stupendous accidents of hypertrophy. For the last time I must strike that note as the memory of the dear, neat little sunlit ancient Tower of London lying away in a gap among the warehouses, comes back to me, that little accumulation of buildings so provincially pleasant and dignified, overshadowed by the vulgarlest, most typical exploit of modern England, the sham Gothic casings to the ironwork of the Tower Bridge. That Tower Bridge is the very balance and confirmation of Westminster’s dull pinnacles and tower. That sham Gothic bridge ; in the very gates of our mother of change, the Sea ! ”

Yes, the true lover of London will always go to the bridges when he returns after a long absence. Standing on London Bridge the silver riband of the river leads the eyes irresistibly skywards to the clouds above

the Tower Bridge, and our thoughts go with our eyes until they are lost in a monstrous fantasia of great ships, cranes, spars, docks, and church towers, from which it is but a step to the midnight stars and the open sea. . . .



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